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LITERARY RECREATIONS

OR

ESSAYS CRITICISMS AND POEMS,

CHIEFLY WRITTEN IN INDIA

BY

• DAVID LESTER RICHARDSON

AUTHOR OF "LITERARY LEAVES" "LITERARY CHIT-CHAT" "CRITICAL
AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES OF THE BRITISH POETS" &c.

Sweet RECREATION barred what doth ensue,
Boozy and dull melancholy,
Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair,
And, at her heels, a huge infectious troop
Of pale distemperatures and foes to life?

Comedy of Errors.

LONDON

W. THACKER AND

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TO

SIR THOMAS NOON TALFOURD

AUTHOR OF "ION"

PREFACE.

THE Book entitled *Literary Leaves* has been long out of print. It having gone through two editions, it was suggested to me, by a publisher, that I might now venture upon a third edition. This gave me courage to prepare the present volume. I do not, however, wish it to be regarded as merely a new edition of an old book. It is something more ; for every alternate prose article, with one exception, (and that the result of a mere inadvertency in supplying the copy to the printer,) now appears for the first time, in the pages of a volume, and many of the pieces, both in prose and verse, which have appeared in other volumes of mine and which are included in this, had no place in *Literary Leaves*. Then again, I have not reprinted *all* the articles in that book ; but have selected those only which I thought, most likely, to be acceptable to the readers of the present volume, and some of those selected, have been much altered, considerably enlarged, and I hope, improved.

I was the more encouraged to act, upon the recommendation of the publisher, and to go a little beyond it, from the fact, that some time before, the *Calcutta Quarterly Review* had suggested the propriety of my preparing “a recast” of all my publications, and accompanied the sugges-

tion with a very flattering prophecy of the fate of such a book, as I might then say before the public.*

The present volume is not precisely what the Reviewer meant, but it makes some approach to it. I have not been quite so severe upon myself, in the selection of articles, as I ought to have been. A desire to make my pages as diversified as I could, has sometimes led me to admit an article which I should readily enough have rejected had I not been more influenced by the nature of the subject than its mode of treatment.

* *Calcutta Quarterly Review* No. XXXI., vol. XVI. Article "*Literary Essays of D. L. Richardson*," pages 289 and 320.

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ERRATA.

[The following errata seem rather numerous ; but after all, they are less so than might have been expected in upwards of seven hundred closely printed pages from the hands of Native composers, who understand not what they read. I put the blame upon myself for having passed them over in the proofs. The reader will greatly oblige me by transferring the corrections to their right places, with his pen or pencil.—D. L. R.]

- 18 Page Insert a full stop after the word *trees*, in the 14th line of the poem.
- 22 „ 12th line from top of page, for *arise* read *rise*.
- 23 „ 17th line, for *medicinal* read *medicinal*.
- 45 „ 2nd line, for *author* read *author's*.
- 51 „ 21st line, for *moment* read *movement*.
- 60 „ 6th line, for *moontide* read *noontide*.
- 69 „ Last line of 8th Ocean Sketch, for *moon* read *noon*.
- 128 „ 1st line of Lines to a Lady, for *spring* read *springs*.
- 136 „ In the line, for “the *jar* of arguments, the *clash* of words,” read “the *clash* of arguments, the *jar* of words.”
- 137 „ 21st line, for *Charles I.* read *Charles II.*
- 167 „ The quotation from Wordsworth is incorrect: it is correctly given on page 563.
- 168 „ Last line of stanza, for *we* read *me*
- 169 „ 4th stanza, for *utnumber* read *outnumber*.
- 178 „ 7th line of 2nd sonnet, for *sudden starles night* read *a sudden starless night*.
- 181 „ 10th line of sonnet, for *round* read *around*.
- 254 „ 8th line, for *Charles I.* read *Charles II.*
- 293 „ In the foot-note, for *to O Darling Room* read *entitled “O Darling Room.”*
- 348 „ Last line but one, for *words* read *word*.
- 356 „ Last line, for *ailings* read *failings*.
- 472 „ In 3rd line of Sonnet, for *boatman* read *boatmen*.
- 589 „ 9th line from the bottom, for *with kettle* read *with a kettle*.
- 645 „ In the last quotation from Bacon, insert the line in italics *before* the words “*than in the hand*.”
- 665 „ In quotation from “Twelfth-Night,” for *jealous* read *jealousy*.

LITERARY RECREATIONS.

LITERARY RECREATIONS.

ON GENIUS.

From heaven descends
The flame of genius to the chosen breast.

Akenside.

“EDUCATION,” says Helvetius, “creates genius, and chance guides education.” He exemplifies his theory by a reference to Galileo and Newton. “Chance,” he says, “conducted Galileo into the gardens of Florence, when the gardeners were working the pumps. Chance inspired the gardener to ask him why they could not raise the water above a certain height, and this casual question, piquing the vanity of the philosopher, led him, by profound study, to discover the solution of the problem.” “Chance,” he continues, “led Newton to the apple-tree; chance loosened the fruit that fell upon him, and gave him the first idea of gravitation.”

But did no one before ever *chance* to ask of other men a question similar to that of the gardener? Did no one ever receive a blow from falling fruit before Newton? How is it that the same chance does not always produce the same result with different men? Who will be so bold as to deny that a thousand persons might have experienced the same accident as Newton, and yet have thought of nothing but the pain from the blow or the size or weight of the apple? Have not all men seen the sun, the moon and the stars, and green fields and glittering rivers—but have all men seen them with a poet’s eye? Poets see something very different in this glorious world from that which mathematicians and utilitarians see. One man coolly counts the stars and measures their distances, while another caring little for these calculations and measurements is absorbed in a rapturous contemplation of their mysterious beauty. To the utilitarian the moon is but a lamp; he “eyes the blue vault, and blesses the *useful* light.”

A primrose by a river’s brim,
A yellow primrose is to him,
And it is nothing more.

It will be said that the difference in the direction of men’s minds is not necessarily a difference in their original organi-

zation; but how is it that almost from its cradle genius takes a decided turn which no force can check or change
How many poets

(Have lisped in numbers, *for the numbers came!*

The father of Petrarch hated poetry and repeatedly destroyed his son's library; but paternal authority could not suppress the poet's genius. Sir Thomas Lawrence evinced a marvellous skill in his favourite art before he entered his teens. Many boys have handled the pencil quite as soon and have had as much encouragement and instruction, and have studied as ardently and long, but without the same success. Many men have devoted half a century to the same art and have failed to the last to equal the free and easy sketches of the inspired boy of ten years of age.

Dr. Johnson defines genius, "a mind of great general powers, accidentally determined by some particular direction," and he illustrates his definition by an allusion to Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose resolution to become a painter, it is said, was determined by a perusal of *Richardson's Treatise on Painting*. But how many thousands of youths might have read the same treatise to less purpose! The spark fell on combustible material. The soil was fit for the seed. Many of our poets have traced their first passion for poetry to the perusal of the *Fairy Queen* of Spenser, but if they had not been poets before, that poem might have had as little effect upon them as *Paradise Lost* produced upon the mathematician who asked what it *proved*. A naturally phlegmatic soul cannot be kindled into poetry by any accident whatever.

The Helvetian theorists affirm that genius is sometimes produced by an incalculable number of small circumstances, and at other times by a single incident. If Newton was made a mathematical genius by the fall of an apple, how is it that he was not previously made a poet or a painter by the beauty of those scenes in nature, which must so often have met his eye, and which have thrilled more sensitive beings with emotions of profound delight? The true answer is, that nature meant him to be a mathematician and not a poet or a painter. Had he been born a poet or a painter, he might have had his skull studded with bumps by the fall of apples, without once dreaming of the law of gravitation.

So far from a general capacity being identical with genius, we often find it to be something manifestly different. A man of general capacity is frequently a jack of all trades and a master of none. Lord Brougham is a man of large general capacity. If *genius* be his, it is not because he is a

man of *large general capacity*; for it is this very encyclopædic capacity of his that has caused that genius to be doubted. He has not concentrated his mind on any one art or science. Accordingly, with all his wonderful knowledge, more wonderful in extent than depth, he is not *first-rate* in any thing. He will not be known to posterity as a high example of excellence, or a great authority, in any one branch of human skill or knowledge. The fame of such a man soon dies away, while it is survived by that of other men who, though excellent in one particular art or department, are immeasurably inferior to him in extent of intellectual powers and attainments. Gray, or Goldsmith, or Collins, the result of whose labours is so insignificant in point of quantity, and compared with whom in mere breadth of intellect and variety of accomplishments, Brougham is a giant, will long outlive him.

A man of genius generally exhibits the passionate partiality and exclusiveness of a lover. He gives up his whole heart to the one object of his idolatry. He thus surpasses other men in some particular art or science, and has little ambition to excel in any other.

One science only will one genius fit,
So vast is art, so narrow human wit;
Not only bounded to peculiar arts,
But ~~on~~ in these confined to single parts.

A first-rate portrait painter is rarely a first-rate landscape painter, and a great landscape painter can seldom make much of a portrait. An artist, who produces miracles in still-life, is perhaps a poor hand at history or landscape painting. A Dutch painter, fond of still-life, surpasses a Raphaëlle or a Salvator Rosa in the representation of a jug and bason. A similar difference of talent is observable amongst those who have distinguished themselves in poetry or music. At all events the world has afforded few or no instances of men who have greatly excelled at once in different arts and sciences requiring different faculties of mind. Is it at all likely that we shall ever hear of a poet as great as Shakespeare being a mathematician as great as Newton? The question is not whether some great poet may not have been also tolerably well skilled in mathematics (though poets generally hate them very cordially), but whether he has been *great* as a mathematician—in other words, a *mathematical genius* as well as a poetical one.

A large general capacity seldom, perhaps never, discovers extraordinary aptitude for any one intellectual excellence. Men of general capacity, indeed, are often deficient in pro-

al information—what sagacity and readiness in mercantile transactions—what smartness and accuracy in official details—what powers of refined and instructive conversation—what elegant and useful accomplishments—are all attainable by a sound, though not inspired, intellect, duly cultivated! Education could never make a Newton or a Shakespeare, but it might confer any, or all, of the desirable qualities just enumerated on sixty or seventy human beings in every hundred.

It has been held by some writers that a man who can greatly excel in one peculiar line only, must have a narrow mind and no genius. It is no argument to the contrary, they say, that Newton excelled only in mathematics or Shakespeare only in the drama. We have no proof, they add, that those great men *could not* have excelled in other arts or sciences. There is no *proof*, indeed, that Shakespeare could not have surpassed Newton in Natural Philosophy, just as there is no *proof* that Jeremy Bentham could not have written better love-songs than Robert Burns. But is this absence of proof to be made a claim upon our faith? Would it be very philosophical to give all men of genius credit for latent powers of the kinds that are rarely, if ever, seen associated with those which they actually exhibit? It is quite possible that Shakespeare might have attained a certain degree of knowledge and skill as a mathematician had he concentrated his faculties upon mathematical science; but it is pretty certain on the other hand that he would never have been above all mathematicians as he is now above all poets. In fact this extraordinary poet might have been a very ordinary mathematician: even indeed a contemptible one. We know that while some men of very small capacity have made a respectable advance in that science, other men of unquestionable genius have studied it in vain. It seems to require a very peculiar order of mind. Le Clerc tells us that Bayle, the subtle reasoner, could not be made to comprehend the first problem in Euclid; and to take a later instance, it has been said that Thomas Babington Macaulay could master almost every branch of study at Cambridge but the mathematical. But even admitting that Shakespeare, by dint of labour, might possibly have passed in safety over the Asses' Bridge, we shall still find it as difficult to believe that he could have produced the *Principia* as that Newton could have produced *Hamlet* and *Othello*. It is monstrous to suppose that the two minds, which gave the world that noble product of profound Science and those miracles of dramatic Art, were essentially of the same order, or that any one mind, by any process of study or education, could have produced both

the science and the poetry of these so wonderfully, but so differently, gifted men. The two natures were distinct in their cradles. •

The *Journal of Education* [October 1832] quotes the case of a child in Sicily, seven years of age, who gave immediate answers to problems which usually require the most tedious arithmetical calculations. He would listen to a difficult question and give his solution while pursuing his pastimes. The boy Chatterton, like Pope,

“Lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came.”

Who can doubt that the genius of the boy-poet and the genius of the boy-arithmetician were originally and essentially different?—who will pretend to believe that they could have changed parts even at an early age and have been equally successful in a different way in after-life? The celebrated “*calculating boy*” exhibited in London, some twenty or thirty years ago, was almost an idiot in every thing but his favourite science. Could he have been as good a poet as he was an arithmetician had he paid the Muses as much attention as he paid to science? We more than doubt it.

But some writers will have it, that because Shakespeare could describe a great general, he might have been a great general himself had he so willed it. This by no means follows. They might as well say that the painter, who executed a good likeness of Sir Isaac Newton, could have become at pleasure as great a mathematician as his model; or that he who can describe an act of heroism must necessarily be a hero himself.

There was a mistake something like this in the compliment which confounded the difference between the genius required to produce the plays of Shakespeare and the genius that was displayed by Garrick in the representation of them. Charles Lamb very effectively ridiculed the blunder. If Shakespeare had produced a treatise on military tactics instead of a sketch of a brave soldier, rather as a *man* than as a *general*, we might have been better able to judge of his military genius than we now are. And yet even then we could not have been sure of him. It might have been mere bookish theoric,

Wherein the togged consuls can propose
As masterly as he.

In saying that Nature *meant* this or that individual to be a poet or a mathematician, it may be objected* that our language is not very accurate, because there are no such things, originally, as *mathematical* ideas or *poetical* ideas. It would

lead us too far out of our way to enter at present into the dispute respecting innate ideas, and all that is now necessary is to explain that we do not intend to say that poets and mathematicians are born in a mature and perfect state like Pallas from the forehead of Jupiter, but that Nature mixes in their original composition the stuff of which great poets and great mathematicians are most easily made. That circumstances more or less favourable are necessary to the development of men's original faculties has never been disputed.

We maintain that first-rate genius, in one department of human excellence, is, generally, incompatible with the possession of first-rate genius in a totally different department.

A *first-rate* poet, for example, is never a *first-rate* mathematician. But there is no reason why a first-rate poet or a first-rate mathematician should not be a brave soldier, or an eloquent orator, or a good historian, or even a good statesman, or almost anything else to a *certain degree* of excellence. It does not follow that because a poet must have more imagination than other men that he should have less of every other faculty or no other faculty whatever. We do not say that no poet or mathematician could possibly acquire a knowledge of any one thing out of the limits of his own art, but that if either desire to attain the *highest excellence* in his own favourite pursuit, he must devote his days and nights almost exclusively to it, and not dissipate his powers by aiming at universality. Art requires the whole man. Art is long and life is short.

It has been said that there is no fool who cannot do *something* well. Very likely; but could a fool write a great and genuine poem, though he could do nothing else? Is that the sort of thing that a fool can do well? Could he produce any thing that the world in general would be likely to mistake for a proof of genius, or which by any process of change or multiplication at his own will or pleasure could assume that character? We say that he who has composed a single play as good as Shakespeare's best, or painted a single picture as good as Raphaelle's best, or composed a single oratorio as good as Handel's best, has proved himself a man of *genius* in the strictest sense of the word, though he should have produced nothing else in any other department of human excellence. But "true genius consists," it has been urged, "in becoming master of many things in the same time that an ordinary mind has learnt one thing." There are not many, we suppose, who would have courage to endorse this most singular definition? When we can be persuaded that the "Admirable Crichton" was a superior genius to Newton or to Shakespeare, we shall adopt

this theory of genius—and not till then. Until that time we shall continue to judge of a man's genius not by the variety of his accomplishments or the celerity of their acquisition, but by the quality of the thing that he has produced or the deed that he has done.

We have seen a list of eminent men which was intended to overthrow the assertion that the greatest genius in one department of human art is rarely, if ever, connected with the greatest genius in any other; but we found no names in the list that at all answered the purpose. What is required to effect this, is the collection of many instances of a combination in one individual of the very highest excellence in two or more different departments requiring a different order of faculties—such as would be exhibited in the combination of the powers of a Newton and a Shakespeare, or a Bentham and a Burns. None of the names of the great men we have seen enumerated would have been familiar to the public fifty years after their death if their fame had rested on those extra accomplishments which have been exultingly attached to their proper and more legitimate claims to the remembrance of mankind.

It is easily *said*, that Leonardo da Vinci was a man “*of universal genius*,” but it is not so easily *proved*. Who ever speaks or thinks of him now as any thing but a painter? If he had really been as great a mathematician as he was a painter, he would have been Newton's equal in science; had he been as great a poet as painter, he would have been on a par with Shakespeare, in his own line; but we may fairly conclude that this was not the case. If he had not been a painter, it is quite possible that he would never have been heard of beyond the limits of his own domestic circle. At all events he has left no proof of super-eminent power in any other department of human excellence. This remark may be applied more or less pertinently to all the instances of *universal genius* yet adduced. We do not say that a man of first-rate genius in one department can learn *nothing* in another of an opposite nature, but that he will not be *first-rate*, in more than one; that he will not, if his power be first-rate in science, be also first-rate in art. He may indeed exhibit some degree of excellence in different branches of his own favourite art or science; though even such a degree of versatility is rare. What we require is a number of instances of *FIRST-RATE* genius in the *fine arts* combined in the same individual with *FIRST-RATE* genius in the *exact sciences*. A single case would prove little. One swallow does not make a summer; a single instance of the combination of the mathematical genius and the poc-

tical in one person would not overthrow our general proposition, any more than the case of the Siamese Twins would justify a general description of man as a *double-bodied race*.

Mere talent, which is comparatively common, is often ignorantly confounded with the rare faculty of genius. Some of our later writers have cleared away a great deal of mystery and confusion on subjects of this nature, but still there are orders of mind very nearly allied to genius, and yet divided from it by an insuperable bar, that have never been very clearly characterized or defined. It is very difficult, for example, to explain why such men as Lord Brougham, or even the late Mr. Mill, cannot be styled men of *genius*. That they must be enrolled amongst men of large understanding, of great powers of some sort or other, must be admitted by all. Judgment, taste, reason, understanding, vast learning, ready wit, and practical talent, do not constitute *genius*—but what does? It is a question we hardly dare attempt to answer. It seems to imply the capability to produce something which can never be the result of mere industry or attention combined with an ordinary capacity—something indeed which even *extraordinary* capacity cannot compass where there is any deficiency of sensibility and imagination. It looks more like inspiration than any thing else. He who can only equal the crowd of common men in their several capabilities, though he combines in his individual self all their different powers, is held to be a man of great industry and talent, but not a man of genius; while he who surpasses all in one solitary excellence, who does in one single instance what no ordinary men can do, and which cannot be accomplished by mere labour, is generally allowed to be a man of genius. But there are powerful intellects, without genius, that seem to demand a higher title than that of *men of talent*. They throw moderate though true, genius, confined to one department, entirely into the shade—for a time! We hardly know how to estimate or class them. For example, the late Mr. Mill was a man of large capacity and of infinitely stronger and wider grasp of intellect than Oliver Goldsmith, but few critics would call Mr. Mill a man of genius, and every critic would at once admit Goldsmith's claim to that distinction. It is difficult to consider men like Mill or Bentham, who with vast understanding were deficient in imagination and sensibility—who, we believe, almost hated poetry and painting and music—it would be difficult we say, to regard them as inspired men—in other words, *men of genius*; and yet assuredly they were something higher than men of talent, and possessed a far greater breadth of intellect than many a true poet or painter,

whose smallest production is a treasure which the world can never willingly part with.

We have said that a *large* general capacity *seldom*, or never, exhibits extraordinary aptitude for any one intellectual excellence; but perhaps it is well to explain that this is not quite equivalent to saying that a *general* capacity is incompatible with the *possession* of genius. There *may* have been instances of men of "large general capacity," who have *possessed* genius,—there *may* have been "mute inglorious Miltons" with a large general capacity, who were at the same time mute inglorious Newtons also—for into the *regions of the unknown* we pretend not to dive—but assuredly no such prodigies have hitherto been discovered. No single individual has yet *exhibited* (whatever he may have *possessed*,) an extraordinary aptitude for the highest excellence in several and totally different departments of art and science. The argument is built on air which assumes certain powers in men of genius that they have never shown.

What can we reason but from what we know ? .

Such assumptions, in a controversy of this nature, are not worth a straw. One proof of the existence of a sort of Siamese-twin-conjunction of a Shakespeare and a Newton, or a Bentham and Burns, would be infinitely more to the purpose than a thousand theories and suppositions, and assumptions in the dark, though, as we said before, even that exception to the general rule would not overthrow the assertion that FIRST-RATE genius in *art* is *rarely* associated with FIRST-RATE genius in *science*. We by no means maintain that a moderate general capacity is absolutely incompatible with any degree of genius at all; but we say that we have never seen a large general capacity associated with *first-rate* genius. Most men of genius have "a general capacity," but not that "large" general capacity that would make them equally successful in different lines. Men of great versatility and almost universal acquirements are generally clever fellows with no genius at all.

There have been instances of men of genius who exhibited various accomplishments in addition to their main excellence, but this is nothing to the purpose, because either the extra qualifications were of a congenial nature, or such, in character or degree, as are clearly within the reach of ordinary minds that have no claim to the honours of genius. Peter the Great was not only a general but also a mechanic, but no theory that we know of denies that a wise king might be a good general or a tolerable carpenter. Who quotes Peter the Great as an authority in the art of war or in the

science of ship-building? Would he have been Peter the Great, had his fame rested only on his military or mechanical skill or knowledge? Sir Joshua Reynolds was an essayist:—but who ever said that a great painter could not compose a lecture on his own art? But was Reynolds as great as a writer as he was as an artist? It is *first-rate* excellence in the same individual in totally different departments and not mediocrity in many, of which we dispute the existence. We believe in the possible existence of more than one congenial excellence in the same individual. We admit that a true poet may be an eloquent prose writer; but yet even congenial excellencies of a first-rate order are, comparatively speaking, but very rarely met with in one individual mind. A true poet who can write a capital pastoral may be utterly unable to produce a good ode.

It has been said that Shakespeare could have excelled in any of the characters his pen has described. We suppose we must let people who so think enjoy that opinion, because they are travelling into the *regions of the unknown*, where we are unable to follow them. We believe Shakespeare has nowhere “described” a *Newton*, but even if he had done so, we should still have doubted the poet’s genius for mathematics. We know and feel, that Shakespeare’s characters are not like the mere *descriptions* of the French dramatists, or of our own Addisons, and Youngs, and Thompsons. But let us remember that it is as a *man* and not as a *scientific general* that Othello is a creation. His generalship is even less than a description—it is a mere hint or a vague allusion. We are required to *take that for granted*.

It does not follow that the writer who conceives and describes, and gives an animated picture of a true hero, must be brave himself, any more than that he who describes “a tun of a man” must himself be stout and heavy, or that he

Who drives fat oxen must himself be fat.

Ulrici, the German critic in his work entitled *Shakespeare’s Dramatic Art*, though on the whole most generous in his interpretation of our great poet’s character, personal and poetical, has ventured to broach a doctrine, equally dangerous and unjust, to the effect, that whatever passion Shakespeare most vividly described, he must have experienced himself. Shakespeare’s conduct was generally pure, he admits, but he maintains that he must have had a hard struggle sometimes with his own nature. “*In a mind like Shakespeare’s*,” says Ulrici, “*sinfulness and the sensual desires and affections must have been equally strong with its vigorous faculties and powers*. When we read in his poems the violent outbreaks of passion,

the deep piercing tone of feeling, the boiling tumults of the affections, and the ever-changing play of a rich glowing fancy, we cannot but suppose that the poet himself must have realized all that he describes with such vivid truth, or, at least, have borne its seed in his own bosom; and our wonder is the greater at his moral energy, which never lost its supremacy amidst such conflicting and rebellious elements of life."

"I do not for a moment," says the same critic, "wish to set up Shakespeare as an abstract hero of virtue. In all likelihood he was but too weak in that point where we are all occasionally but too frail. Only we must bear in mind, that loveliness and the magic power of beauty, immediately depend upon the exuberance and sensibility of feeling and fancy, which the poet, as such, must possess, in an eminent degree; and that, consequently, the poet, more than any other of the sons of Eve, must be open to such temptations. Besides which we must take into consideration the natural admiration of highly gifted women for artists and poets, into whose arms they frequently fling themselves." Was Ulrici thinking of Pope's sneer at the Duchess of Marlborough?

She sins with poets through pure love of wit.

"The age in which Shakespeare was guilty of this weakness," continues this German critic, "was the brilliant jubilee of his career—the time of poetic intoxication—in which all the chords of his inmost being were vibrating to their utmost stretch, and in which every pulse must have throbbed with the intensest play of all his passions and energies. The moral judge must judge as a man, and make due allowance for the subjectivity of the sinner, even in the presence of the objectivity of right and virtue, otherwise the deed condemned and the virtue by which it is judged, will, for ever, stand apart from each other in cold and lifeless abstraction." The reader will hardly feel the full force of this very remarkable defence of Shakespeare's sins with the fair, if he does not know or recollect that Ulrici professes to give an estimate of Shakespeare as a poet from the high points of view of modern æsthetics,—of Christian æsthetics. "I have confined myself," he says, "to set forth the profundity and sublimity of his poetical view of life, which is simply on this account sublime and profound; because it was Christian, and Christian also because it was profound and sublime."

Dr. Johnson, in his *Life of Thompson*, the poet, alludes to the remark of an earlier biographer, that an author's life is best seen in his works. "His observation," says Dr. Johnson, "was not well timed. Savage, who lived

much with Thompson, once told me, he heard a learned lady remarking, that she could gather from his works three parts of his character, that he was a great lover, a great swimmer, and rigorously abstinent; but said Savage, he knows not any love but that of the sex; he was perhaps never in cold water in his life, and he indulges himself in all the luxury within his reach." We may judge with tolerable certainty of a man's intellectual powers by his published works, but not of his moral character or disposition. Gay men have been gloomy writers, and gloomy writers gay men. Men whose spirit is willing but whose flesh is weak, may be very moral writers, though they lead licentious lives.

It is surely far easier to give a life-like representation of the skill or accomplishments of others than to exhibit them in our own person.

We feel as much as the writer of the following sentence, how great are the advantages of poetry over the sister arts of painting and sculpture, but we think he hardly does justice to the two latter:—

"Shakespeare's characters are not inanimate puppets, but flesh and blood realities. They show how infinitely the poet's art transcends the painter's or the sculptor's. The Madonnas of Raphael and the stone men of Phidias must eventually perish, while the poetical creations of our land will live, speak, feel and act; and, surviving countless generations of ephemeral mortals, will endure to all eternity."

A great painter or sculptor *creates* precisely in the same sense of the word as a great poet does. Character, life, soul, sentiment, may breathe from the canvas or the stone as well as from the printed page. That which is enshrined in books is indeed more secure of preservation than that which is trusted to cloth or marble, but this is an accidental or adventitious advantage, and in no degree affects the question of the amount of genius bestowed on each production or the relative merits of the several arts. Poetry held the same intellectual rank before the invention of printing as it does now. It is not because a written character by Shakespeare is more of "a flesh and blood reality" than a painted Madonna by a Raphaele, or a sculptured figure by a Phidias, or that the one will last longer than the other, that we award the palm to poetry; for if it were possible to preserve paintings and statues as long as poems (and it is not easy to say how long paintings and statues might be kept by care), it would add nothing to their rank as intellectual creations, and we should still regard poetry as the nobler art. The inherent defects of painting and sculpture consist in their results being mute and motionless, limited in each individual work to the aspect of an instant, and one glance on

space, and the impossibility of representing with the brush or with the chisel, the more subtle and complicated operations of the mind and heart, or of embodying and making visible to the common world

Those thoughts that wander through eternity.

As to mere *reality*, painting and sculpture have an advantage over poetry—their expression is decidedly more palpable and determinate. Painting, especially, makes the absent present.

For she can give us back the dead
E'en in the loveliest looks they wore.

For the sake of some of our younger readers, who may possibly have never given a thought to the subject, let us illustrate the superiority of *pen* description over *brush* description, by a remark or two on Ophelia's account of the conduct of *Hamlet*.

He took me by the wrist, and held me hard ;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm ;
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face
As he would draw it. Long staid he so ;
At last,—a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,—
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk
And end his being : that done, he lets me go ;
And with his head over his shoulder turned,
He seemed to find his way without his eyes ;
For out o' doors he went without their help,
And to the last, bended their light on me.

What a variety of movements within the compass of fourteen lines—the limits of a single sonnet ! Painting is still-life compared to this.

He took me by the wrist, and held me hard.

This line would make a single picture of itself. Here the painter might equal the poet.

Then goes he to the length of all his arm.

But here is a change of time and action which outstrips the painter's art.

And, with his other arm thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face
As he would draw it.

Here is another subject for a separate picture. The artist must take a new canvas.

Long staid he so ,
At last,—

The painter would make him stay so *for ever*—his *at first*
and his *at last* would be the same. c

Long staid he so ;
At last,—a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,—
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk
And end his being :

The painter cannot make his colored creations either shake the arm or nod the head, and though he can paint a tear, the profound and piteous sigh must for ever elude his art.

That done, he lets me go :

Another change of time and action in which the poet leaves the painter behind him.

And, with his head over his shoulder turned,
He seemed to find his way without his eyes ;
For out o' doors he went without their help,
And to the last, bended their light on me.

This most distinct and beautiful word-painting by a poet, goes far beyond the reach of the colorist's art. If a painter were to attempt the same scene on a single canvas, he would be obliged to imply vaguely what the poet has told clearly, and leave the finest turns of his story at the mercy of blundering imaginations. When the painter keeps within the proper province of his own art, his colors are a universal language. They are then more definite than the clearest verses. But his province compared to that of the poet is extremely limited. The poet, we see, can give a rapid succession of pictures in one brief passage, which would occupy him perhaps but an hour or two in the writing of it ; but to represent the same objects under the several changes, the artist in colours would have to paint many separate pictures, and perhaps with years of labour.

It is possible for a *true* poet, though not a *great* one, to have one faculty only (the imagination) in a very superior degree, while his other faculties are no more than equal to the same faculties in ordinary men or men of mere talent. At the same time there is nothing impossible or incompatible, in several of the faculties existing in almost equal degrees in the same man, though they be not equally exercised. In men of mere talent, such equality is far from uncommon : but it is so rare in men of genius, that we cannot recollect a single instance of any certain evidence of such equality. Where this equality is known to exist, we observe in the possessor as much readiness or inclination for one pursuit as for another, but the man of genius always seems to feel where his real strength lies, and

exhibits a disposition, that no ordinary obstacles can check, to cultivate his best faculty to the utmost of his means.

If a man exhibit a large general capacity, and succeed to a certain extent in many things, the vulgar are apt enough to be dazzled by the variety of his accomplishments and to give him credit for universal genius ; but no thoughtful critic can be so easily deceived.*

WOMAN.

THE day-god sitting on his western throne
With all his ' gorgeous company of clouds'—
The gentle moon that meekly disenchours
Her beauty when the solar glare is gone—
The myriad eyes of night—the pleasant tone
Of truant rills when o'er the pebbled ground
Their silver voices tremble—the calm sound
Of rustling leaves in noon-tide forests lone—
The cheerful song of birds—the hum of bees—
The zephyrs dance that like the footing fine
Of moonlight fays scarce prints the glassy seas,—
Are *all* enchantments! But Oh, what are these
When music, poetry, and love combine
In WOMAN'S voice and lineaments divine ?

* Voltaire's universality is a fair illustration of the nature of "a large capacity." He might be called, we think, what Coleridge called Mackintosh—"king of the men of talent." "In life," says Carlyle, "Voltaire was found to be without good claim to the title of philosopher; and now in literature, and for similar reasons, we find in him the same deficiencies. Here too it is not *greatness*, but the very extreme of *expertness*, that we recognize; not strength, so much as agility; not *depth*, but *superficial extent*. That truly surprizing ability seems rather the unparalleled combination of many common talents, than the exercise of any finer or higher one: for here too the want of earnestness, of intense continuance, is fatal to him. He has the eye of a lynx; sees deeper than any one man, at the first glance, but no second glance is given."

Since writing the above note, we have fallen in with a paragraph in Leigh Hunt's *Table Talk* (a work not to be confounded with Hazlitt's under the same title) to the same effect:—"Perhaps Voltaire may be briefly, and not unjustly characterized as the only man who ever obtained a place in the list of the greatest names of the earth, by aggregation of secondary abilities. He was the god of cleverness. To be sure he was a very great wit."

ENGLAND AND BENGAL.

PART I.

AN ENGLISH LANDSCAPE—THE BANKS OF THE GANGES.

I STOOD upon an English hill,
 And saw the far meandering rill,
 A vein of liquid silver, run
 Sparkling in the summer sun ;
 While a-down that green hill's side,
 And along the valley wide,
 Sheep, like small clouds touched with light,
 Or like little breakers bright,
 Sprinkled o'er a smiling sea,
 Seemed to float at liberty.

Scattered all around were seen,
 White cots on the meadows green,
 Open to the sky and breeze,
 Or peeping through the sheltering trees,
 On a light gate, loosely hung,
 Laughing children gaily swung;
 Oft their glad shouts, shrill and clear,
 Came upon the startled ear,
 Blended with the tremulous bleat
 Of truant lambs, or voices sweet
 Of birds, that take us by surprise,
 And mock the quickly-searching eyes.

Nearer sat a bright-haired boy,
 Whistling with a thoughtless joy ;
 A shepherd's crook was in his hand,
 Emblem of a mild command ;
 And upon his rounded cheek
 Were hues that ripened apples streak.
 Disease, nor pain, nor sorrowing,
 Touched that small Arcadian king ;
 His sinless subjects wandered free—
 Confusion without anarchy ;
 Happier he upon his throne,
 The breezy hill—though all alone—
 Than the grandest monarch proud
 Who mistrusts the kneeling crowd.

On a gently rising ground,
 The long green valley's farthest bound,
 Bordered by an ancient wood,
 The cots in thicker clusters stood,
 And a church uprose between,
 Hallowing the peaceful scene.
 Distance o'er its old walls threw
 A soft and dim cerulean hue,
 While the sun-lit gilded spire
 Gleamed as with celestial fire !

I have crossed the ocean wave,
 Haply for a foreign grave ;
 Haply never more to look
 On a British hill or brook ;
 Haply never more to hear
 Sounds unto my childhood dear ;
 Yet if sometimes on my soul
 Bitter thoughts beyond controul
 Throw a shade more dark than night,
 Soon upon the mental sight
 Flashes forth a pleasant ray
 Brighter, holier, than the day ;
 And unto that happy mood
 All seems beautiful and good.

Seated on a bank of green,
 Gazing on an Indian scene,
 I have dreams the mind to cheer,
 And a feast for eye and ear.
 At my feet a river flows,
 And its broad face richly glows
 With the glory of the sun
 Whose proud race is nearly run.
 Ne'er before did sea or stream
 Kindle thus beneath his beam ;
 Ne'er did miser's eye behold
 Such a glittering mass of gold !
 'Gainst the gorgeous radiance float
 Darkly, many a sloop and boat,
 While in each the figures seem
 Like the shadows of a dream ;
 Swiftly, passively, they glide,
 As sliders on a frozen tide.

Sinks the sun—the sudden night
 Falls—yet still the scene is bright ;

Now the fire-fly's living spark
 Glances through the foliage dark,
 And along the dusky stream
 Myriad lamps, with ruddy gleam,
 On the small waves float and quiver,
 As if upon the favored river,
 And to mark the sacred hour,
 Stars had fallen in a shower.

For many a mile is either shore
 Illumined with a countless store,
 Of lustres ranged in glittering rows;
 Each a golden column throws
 To light the dim depths of the tide;
 And the moon, in all her pride,
 Though beautifully her regions glow,
 Views a scene as fair below.*

Never yet hath waking vision
 Wrought a picture more Elysian;
 Never gifted poet seen
 Aught more radiant and serene!
 Though upon my native shore,
 'Mid the hallowed haunts of yore,
 There are scenes that might impart
 Dearer pleasure to my heart,
 Scenes that in the soft light gleam
 Of youth's unforgotten dream,
 Yet the soul were dull and cold
 That its tribute could withhold
 When enchantment's magic wand
 Waves o'er this romantic land!

PART II.

AN INDIAN SUNSET—A DREAM OF ENGLAND.

The setting sun is broad and bright,
 The clouds, bathed in golden light,
 Firm as eternal mountains seem,
 Though unsubstantial as a dream;
 Like a sun-lit frozen sea,
 But lovelier far, how silently
 The green earth sleepeth! Each small air,
 That toyed with tremulous leaflets fair,

* This description has reference to the night of some religious festival.

And won with its unconscious art
 The fragrance of the rose's heart,
 Hath sunk to rest, like children gay
 Suddenly slumbering 'midst their play.

Tree-tendrils, thrilled with lightest air,
 Hang motionless as painted hair
 Of saints from hallowed panes that smile
 Upon the hushed cathedral aisle.

Sun-kissed lucid leaves are seen
 Flushed with blood of golden green,
 Bright as slumbering features fine,
 Blushing with a dream divine ;

Lengthened lines of light and shade,
 With more than art's sweet magic laid,
 Streak the rich earth's breast serene,
 With brightest orange, deepest green.

Radiant cloudlets in the west,
 Images of blissful rest,
 Wear those strange transcendant hues
 That mock the painter and the Muse ;
 While upon the glassy lake,
 Where no ripple dares to break,
 Lies each soft reflected dye,
 Fixed as in the breezeless sky.

Now that sky and lake seem one,
 The land between is like a zone,
 Or panoramic garden fair,
 Hanging lightly in mid air.

Reverently turn away
 From the quickly sinking Day,
 Watch not the proud lord of light
 Pass to subterranean night.

Mark his solemn birth-place dim
 Where the spectral shadows swim,
 And the bat, with sudden stir,
 Startles the thoughtful wanderer ;
 Or in dusky grove behold
 Tiny stars of living gold,

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Darting, twinkling, till each bough
Like a spangled vest doth show.

This land is not my father-land,
And yet I love it—for the hand
Of God hath left its mark sublime
On nature's face in every clime;—
Though from home and friends we part,
Nature and the human heart
Still may soothe the wanderer's care—
And his God is every-where.

Beneath Bengala's azure skies,
No vallies sink, no green hills arise,
Like those the vast sea-billows make—
The land is level as a lake.*
But, oh! what giants of the wood
Wave their wide arms, or calmly brood
Each o'er his own deep rounded shade
When noon's fierce sun the breeze hath laid,
And all is still.—On every plain
How green the sward, or rich the grain!
In jungle wild and garden trim,
Open lawn and covert dim,
What glorious shrubs and flowerets gay,
Bright birds, and lordly beasts of prey!
How prodigally Gunga pours
Her wealth of waves through verdant shores,
O'er which the sacred peepul bends,
And oft a skeleton line extends
Of twisted root, well-laved and bare,
Half in water, half in air!

Fair scenes! where breeze and sun diffuse
The sweetest odours, fairest hues—
Where brightest the bright day-god shows,
And his gentle sister throws,
Her softest spell on silent plain,
Stirless wood, and slumbering main—
Where the lucid starry sky
Opens most to mortal eye
The wide and mystic dome serene
Meant for visitants unseen,
A dream-like temple, air-built hall,
Where spirits pure hold festival!

* The lower part of Bengal, not far from Calcutta, is here described.

Fair scenes! whence envious art might steal
 More charms than fancy's realms reveal—
 Where the tall palm to the sky
 Lifts its wreath triumphantly—
 And the bambu's tapering bough
 Loves its flexile arch to throw—
 Where sleeps the favored lotus white,
 On the still lake's bosom bright—
 Where the champac's blossoms shine;
 Offerings meet for Brahma's shrine;
 While the fragrance floateth wide
 O'er velvet lawn and glassy tide—
 Where the mangoe tope bestows
 Night at noon-day—cool repose,
 'Neath burning heavens—a hush profound
 Breathing o'er the shaded ground—
 Where the medicinal neem,
 Of palest foliage, softest gleam,
 And the small-leaved tamarind
 Tremble at each whispering wind—
 And the long-plumed cocoas stand
 Like the princes of the land,
 Near the betel's pillar slim,
 With capital richly wrought and trim—
 And the neglected, wild sonail
 Drops her yellow ringlets pale—
 And light airs summer odours throw
 From the bala's breast of snow—
 Where the Briarean banian shades
 The crowded ghât, while Indian maids,
 Untouched by noon-tide's scorching rays,
 Lave the sleek limb, or fill the vase,
 With liquid life, or on the head
 Replace it, and, with graceful tread,
 And form erect, and movement slow,
 Back to their simple dwellings go—
 [Walls of earth, that stoutly stand,
 Neatly smoothed with wetted hand—
 Straw-roofs, yellow once and gay,
 Turned by time and tempest gray—]
 Where the merry minahs crowd
 Umbrageous haunts, and chirrup loud—
 And shrilly talk the parrots green
 'Midst the thick leaves dimly seen—
 And through the quivering foliage play,
 Light as birds, the squirrels gay,

Quickly as the noontide beams
 Dance upon the rippled streams—
 Where the pariah* howls with fear,
 If the white man passeth near—
 Where the beast that mocks our race
 With taper finger, solemn face,
 In the cool shade sits at ease
 Calm and grave as Socrates—
 Where the sluggish buffaloe
 Wallows in mud, and huge and slow,
 Like massive cloud or sombre van,
 Moves the land leviathan†—
 Where beneath the jungle's screen
 Close-enwoven, lurks unseen
 The couchant tiger; and the snake
 His sly and sinuous way doth make
 Through the rich mead's grassy net,
 Like a miniature rivulet—
 Where small white cattle, scattered wide,
 Browse from dawn to even-tide—
 Where the river-watered soil
 Scarce demands the ryot's toil;
 And the rice field's emerald light
 Outvies Italian meadows bright;—
 Where leaves of every shape and dye,
 And blossoms varied as the sky,
 The fancy kindle;—fingers fair
 That never closed on aught but air;
 Hearts, that never heaved a sigh;
 Wings, that never learned to fly;
 Cups, that ne'er went table round;
 Bells, that never rang with sound;
 Golden crowns, of little worth;
 Silver stars, that strew the earth;
 Filagree fine and curious braid,
 Breathed, not labored, grown, not made;
 Tresses like the beams of morn,
 Without a thought of triumph worn;
 Tongues that prate not; many an eye
 Untaught 'midst hidden things to pry;
 Brazen trumpets, long and bright,
 That never summoned to the fight;
 Shafts, that never pierced a side,
 And plumes, that never waved with pride;—

* The dog of Bengal.

† The Elephant.

Scarcely Art a shape may know
But Nature here that shape can show.

Through this soft air, o'er this warm sod,
Stern deadly Winter never trod;
The woods their pride for centuries wear,
And not a living branch is bare;
Each field for ever boasts its bowers,
And every season brings its flowers.

Bengala's plains are richly green,
Her azure skies of dazzling sheen,
Her rivers vast, her forests grand,
Her gardens lovely,—but the land,
Though dear to countless eyes it be,
And fair to mine, hath not for me
The charm ineffable of *home*;
For still I yearn to see the foam
Of wild waves on thy pebbled shore,
Dear Albion! to ascend once more
Thy snowy cliffs; to hear again
The murmur of the circling main—
To stroll down each romantic dale
Beloved in boyhood—to inhale
Fresh life on bare and breezy hills—
To trace the coy retreating rills—
To see the clouds at summer-tide
Dappling all the landscape wide;
To mark the varying gloom and glow
As the seasons come and go—
Again the green meads to behold
Thick strewn with silvery gems and gold,
Where kine, bright-spotted, large and sleek,
Browse silently, with aspect meek,
Or motionless in shallow stream
Stand mirror'd, till their twin shapes seem,
Feet linked to feet, forbid to sever,
By some strange magic fixed for ever.

And, oh! once more I fain would see
(Here never seen) a poor man *free*,
And valuing more an humble name
But stainless than a guilty fame.
How sacred is the simplest cot,
Where freedom dwells—where she is not
How mean the palace! Where's the spot

She loveth more than thy small isle,
 Queen of the sea? Where hath her smile
 So stirred man's inmost nature? Where
 Are courage firm, and virtue fair,
 And manly pride, so often found
 As in rude huts on English ground,
 Where e'en the heart that slaves for hire
 May kindle with a freeman's fire?

How proud a sight to English eyes
 Are England's village families!
 The patriarch, with his silver hair,
 The matron grave, the maiden fair,
 The rose-checked child, the sturdy lad,
 On Sabbath day all neatly clad;—
 Methinks I see them wend their way
 On some refulgent morn of May,
 By hedgerows trim, of fragrance rare,
 Towards the hallow'd House of Prayer?

I can love *all* lovely lands,
 But England *most*; for she commands,
 As if she bore a parent's part,
 The dearest movements of my heart,
 And here I may not breathe her name,
 Without a thrill through all my frame.

Never shall this heart be cold
 To thee my country! till the mould
 (Or *thine* or *this*) be o'er it spread,
 And form its dark and silent bed:
 I never think of bliss below
 But thy sweet hills their green heads show,
 Of love and beauty never dream,
 But English faces round me gleam!

E'en now the charm of English skies
 Fancy's wizard glass supplies.
 Beneath the visionary light
 Familiar scenes grow fresh and bright.

Across the smooth lawn in the sun
 I see my own sweet children run!
 I see their laughing features fair,
 Their soft blue eyes and flaxen hair.
 Their distant father's friends of yore
 Stand smiling at the cottage door,

With one whose fond but earnest air
 Reveals a rapture touched with care;
 Thrilled, as with a sweet surprise,
 A mother's heart is in her eyes!

Ah! these are images and dreams
 More dear than foreign groves and streams,
 Though fair as landscapes bade to shine
 Beneath the primal light divine!

ON CHILDREN.

Ah! that once more I were a careless child.

Coleridge.

He plays yet like a young apprentice the first day, and is not come to his task of melancholy.

Bishop Earle.

ALMOST every thing new or young has a charm for human eyes. The rosy light of dawn—the spring of the year—the haunts of our childhood—our earliest companions and our first amusements, are connected with associations infinitely more enchanting than all later scenes and objects. It is partly owing to this law of our nature, that the sight of children thrills and softens the heart in maturer life with such indescribable sensations of sadness and delight. They remind us of our sweetest hours, revive our most hallowed affections, and bring into our eyes those tears of luxurious tenderness that are more precious than springs in a sandy desert. At the pure smile of childhood, the baser impulses and more sordid cares of life suddenly betray their genuine aspects of deformity, and vanish from the heart. “A change comes over the spirit of our dreams.”

All men of sensibility and imagination, occasionally travel back, through the mist of dreams, to the scenes of their own happy childhood. The fondly reverted eye is charmed with images of peace and beauty. When contrasted with these delightful retrospections, how dreary and barren seems our onward path! Every step that we take but increases our distance from the regions of enchantment. 'Tis a melancholy journey into unknown lands—an eternal exile from the home of innocence and joy. The atmosphere of existence thickens as we advance, and all things assume a sombre aspect, till at last we reach the dread goal of our earthly pilgrimage, the

Poison Tree of death, and are so weary and way-worn, that we even welcome its horrid silence and its hideous shade.

If men may dare to idolize any sublunary thing, it is a sinless and smiling child. "Suffer," says Jesus Christ, "little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, *for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*" The author of these beautiful words was once an infant himself, and oh, ineffable glory! the pure light that encircled the child, still shone around the man! It is a touching, and I hope not an irreverent reflection, that he whose manhood surpassed all human conceptions—he whom men believe to have been the Deity himself—did not, in his earlier years, exhibit to earthly eyes more innocence and beauty than are easily conceivable in a human child. Could we but preserve our first purity with the progress of our intellectual powers, we should indeed be little lower than the angels. The description of our first parents in Paradise is like a radiant vision, but I cannot help regarding it, beautiful as it is, as in some degree deficient in one great source of poetical and human interest, when I remember that they knew not the charms of childhood, but came abruptly, I had almost said unnaturally, into mature existence, unaccompanied by those earlier associations which like the shadows in the golden light of evening, grow more and more lovely as our day declines, and reflect their lingering hues upon our latest path. Methinks that even Paradise itself would have looked more divine, had little human cherubim flitted gaily over the green velvet slopes, and passed from flower to flower, their light laughs breaking like celestial music on the air, and their golden locks glittering in the sun.

A lovely woman is an object irresistibly enchanting, and the austerer grace of manhood fills the soul with a proud sense of the majesty of human nature; but there is something far less earthly and more intimately allied to our holiest imaginings in the purity of a child. It satisfies the most delicate fancy and the severest judgment. Its happy and affectionate feelings are unchecked by one guileful thought, or one cold suspicion. Its little beauteous face betrays each emotion of its heart, and is as transparent as the silvery cloud-veil of a summer sun that shows all the light within. It is as fearless and as innocent in its waking hours as in its quiet slumbers. It loves every one, and smiles on all!

I have sometimes gazed upon a beautiful child with a passion only equalled in intensity by that of youthful love. The heart at such a time is nearly stifled with a mixed emotion of tenderness, admiration, and delight. It almost aches with affection. I can fully sympathize in a mother's deep idolatry. I love *all* lovely children; and have often yearned

to imprint a thousand passionate kisses upon a stranger's child, though met perhaps but for a moment in theatres or in streets, and passing from me, like a radiant shadow, to be seen no more. The sudden appearance of a child of extraordinary beauty comes upon the spirit like a flash of light, and often breaks up a train of melancholy thoughts, as a sun-burst scatters the mist of morning.

The changing looks and attitudes of children afford a perpetual feast to every eye that has a true perception of grace and beauty. They surpass the sweetest creations of the poet or the painter.* They are prompted by maternal nature, who keeps an incessant watch over her infant favourites, and directs their minutest movements, and their most evanescent thoughts. Beneath such holy tutorage they can never err. They throw their sleek and pliant limbs into every variety of posture, and still preserve the true line of beauty, as surely as a ball preserves its roundness. They live in an atmosphere of loveliness, and like moving clouds are ever changing their ethereal aspects, and yet always catch the light.

Even the moral defects of maturer years are often beautiful in childhood, and bear a different character. The cunning of the man is innocent archness in the child. Ignorance in the one, is a gross and miserable condition; in the other, it is purity and bliss. The imperfections that are ludicrous or offensive in manhood, in infancy are inexpressibly engaging. The stammering of an adult, or his mistakes in acquiring a new language, are displeasing to the most friendly ear, and even lower him in some degree in his own estimation. But the first imperfect sounds and broken words of a child, are as sweet as the irregular music of interrupted rivulets. They stir the heart like magic, and impel us, as it were, in the sudden wantonness of affection, to shut the little rosy portals of the cherub's soul with a shower of impetuous kisses. The garrulity of age is not like the eager prattling of infancy. The child's artless talk can never weary us. Our ears are as tireless as his tongue.

Timidity in manhood is degrading, but in a little child it is interesting and lovely, whether he flies from the object of alarm like a startled fawn, or nestles closer in his mother's lap. The coquetry of a woman is vanity and deceit, but in a child it is mere playfulness and innocent hilarity. Every thing connected with childhood changes its nature. Words of abuse become words of endearment. *Imp* and *rogue*, when

* Northcote tells us, that when Sir Joshua Reynolds desired to learn what real grace was, he studied it in the natural movements of children.

applied to an infant, are soft and fond expressions that fall gracefully from the fairest lips.

The drums and rattles of the child are objects of unalloyed delight, but the playthings of the man are grave and terrible delusions. They goad him with secret thorns that rankle in his heart for ever. Envy, avarice, and ambition, mingle their poison in his sweetest cup. Even his superior knowledge is but a source of evil. It surrounds him with temptations, while it throws a shadow upon all his hopes, and takes off the bloom from life. It is too little for his mind, and too much for his heart.

The child, on the other hand, revels in his happy consciousness of present good, and foresees no future ill. He knows neither weariness nor discontent. "Solitude" to him is sometimes "blithe society," and in the thickest crowds, he is as free and unconstrained as in his loneliest haunts. His ingenuous heart is never chilled by the glance of a human eye, nor can he fashion his innocent features into a false expression. His own eye is as lucid as the breeze-bared heavens. If he read no "sermon in stones" he sees "good in every thing." He has universal faith. He discovers nothing evil, and sees none but friends. He gives up his whole being to gentle affections, and a sense of unequivocal enjoyment. He is not what cold age would make him, "nothing, if not critical." To him the rise of the green curtain at the theatre reveals a real world. He has ever a tear for the distresses of the heroine, and breathes harder as he gazes, with all his soul in his eyes, on the hero's adventurous exploits. The tricks and conundrums of the clown are never flat, or stale, or unprofitable to him, and he fitly testifies to their merit, when holding his lovely head aside (his cheek as round and blooming as a sun-kissed peach,) he claps his little palms together in an ecstasy of admiration, and then turns to the maternal face, as if assured of her hearty sympathy in his delight.

It is a sweet employment to watch the first glimmering of the human mind, and to greet the first signs of joy that give life and animation to the passive beauty of an infant's face, like the earliest streaks of sunshine upon opening flowers. But alas! this pleasure is too often interrupted by the sad reflection, that the bright dawn of existence is succeeded by a comparatively clouded noon, and an almost starless night. Each year of our life is a step lower on the radiant ladder that leads to heaven, and when we at last descend into the horrible vault of death, our best hope is that we may rise again to a state resembling the happy purity of our childhood.

What a holy thing is maternal love? Even its errors reflect honour upon human nature. The mother sees her own

offspring through a sweet and peculiar medium, and traces a thousand charms that are undiscovered by less partial eyes, while she is blind to those defects that are palpable to others. The loved are ever lovely. So beautifully does true affection thus qualify every object to our desires.

There is a divine contagion in all beauteous things. We alternately colour objects with our own fancies and affections, or receive from them a kindred hue.

"Like the sweet South.
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour."

This principle pervades all nature, physical and moral. Let those who would trace an expression of serenity and tenderness on a human face, watch a person of sensibility, as he gazes upon a painting by Claude or Raphaelle. In contemplating a fine picture, we drink in its spirit through our eyes. If a lovely woman would increase her charms, let her gaze long and ardently on all beauteous things. Let her not indulge those passions which deform the features, but cultivate, on the contrary, every soft affection. It will soon become an easy task, for one good feeling suggests and supports another. We insensibly and involuntarily adapt our aspect to our emotions, and long habits of thought and feeling leave a permanent impression on the countenance. Every one believes thus far in physiognomy, and acts more or less decidedly upon his belief. But even the effect upon the features of a transient emotion is truly wonderful. A fierce man often looks beautifully tender and serene when either caressing or caressed, and deceives us like the ocean in a calm, which at times seems "the gentlest of all gentle things."

Who can wonder at the intensity of a mother's love, when even strangers hardened by a struggle with the world are often affected by the engaging ways of children? There is not a more interesting sight in nature than the sudden smile which they sometimes call up in a countenance rendered habitually grave by the cares of business or ambition. I remember entering a well-known mercantile house in London, just as some unfavourable intelligence had been received. The head of the firm, with his hard but honest features, looked at once stern and anxious. A small hand twitched his coat behind. He turned slowly round, with a sullen and almost a savage brow. His eye fell upon the prettiest little human face that ever gleamed upon the earth. But the child's merry laughter was scarcely more delightful than the bland and beautiful smile that kindled on the merchant's care-worn cheek. His aspect underwent such an instantaneous and entire change,

that he looked as if he had changed his nature also. Had a painter stamped his portrait on the canvass at that happy moment, it would have presented an exquisite illustration of amenity and love. Few, however, of his mercantile friends, would have recognized the man of business. He was single and childless ; but the fondest parent could not have greeted his own offspring with a sweeter welcome.

I have in some moods preferred the paintings of our own Gainsborough to those of Claude—and for this single reason, that the former gives a peculiar and more touching interest to his landscapes by the introduction of sweet groups of children. These lovely little figures are moreover so thoroughly English, and have such an out-of-door's air, and seem so much a part of external nature, that an Englishman who is a lover of rural scenery can hardly fail to be enchanted with the style of his celebrated countryman. His children have not been dandled in courts or drawing-rooms, nor tutored by fiddling and caper-cutting dancing-masters. They have a natural grace about them that is always charming to an unsophisticated eye. They spring up into life and beauty like the flowers around them, that are the more lovely the less they are meddled with by an ambitious taste. They are

The sweetest things that ever grew
Beside a human door.

When I re-visited my dear native country, after an absence of many weary years, and a long dull voyage, my heart was filled with unutterable delight and admiration. The land seemed a perfect paradise. It was in the spring of the year. The blue vault of heaven, over which were scattered a few silver clouds—the clear atmosphere—the balmy vernal breeze—the quiet and picturesque cattle, browsing on luxuriant verdure, or standing knee deep in a crystal lake—the blue hills sprinkled with snow-white sheep and sometimes partially shadowed by a wandering cloud—the meadows glowing with golden butter-cups and be-dropped with daisies—the trim hedges of crisp and sparkling holly—the sound of near but unseen rivulets, and the songs of foliage-hidden birds—the white cottages almost buried amidst trees, like happy human nests—the ivy-covered church, with its old grey spire “pointing up to heaven,” and its gilded vane gleaming in the light—the sturdy peasants with their instruments of healthy toil—the white-capped matrons bleaching their newly-washed garments in the sun, and throwing them like snow-patches on green slopes or glossy garden shrubs—the sun-browned village girls, resting idly on their round elbows at small open casements, their faces in sweet keeping

with the trellised flowers :—all formed a combination of enchantments that would mock the happiest imitative efforts of human art. But though the bare enumeration of the details of this English picture, will perhaps awaken many dear recollections in the reader's mind, I have omitted by far the most interesting feature of the whole scene—the *rosy children loitering about the cottage gates, or tumbling gaily on the warm grass!*

When the cottager of England ventures to link himself for life to the object of his honest affections, and anticipates without dismay “the ruddy family around,” he is rebuked by the political economists for what they consider his culpable imprudence. These unfeeling calculators seem to forget that a poor man is a human being. They might almost as well expect him to abstain entirely from the simplest food, (for even that to him is inconveniently expensive, and very sorely gained) as to check all those natural yearnings of the heart which as surely indicate the sources of true enjoyment as do any purely physical desires. They forget too, how the thought of wife and children nerves the labourer's arm, and how, when the daily task is over, he is soothed and cheered by their evening welcome. His “home is home, however homely.” If the husband and the father has a heavy task, his reward is great. “*The Cottar's Saturday Night's*” enjoyments are often cheaply purchased by a week of labour. Children are not less precious to the English peasant than they were to the Roman matron. They are alike “*the jewels*” of the high-born and the humble.

But even in a political point of view, marriage is commendable, for it puts a man in the way of becoming a quiet, a useful, and an industrious citizen. “They who marry,” says Bishop Atterbury, “give hostages to the public that they will not attempt the ruin of society or disturb its peace.” The American Franklin, who can hardly be suspected of a romantic enthusiasm or a want of prudence, expresses his disapproval of the unnatural state of celibacy for life, and maintains that it makes a man of less value than he ought to be.* In a moral sense, marriage is especially advantageous. “Certainly,” says Lord Bacon, “wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity ; and single men, though they may be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhausted, yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hard-hearted, (good to make severe inquisitors,) because their tenderness is not so often called upon.”

“The best thing I can wish you,” said Sir Walter Scott to Washington Irving, “is that when you return to your own

* It was he, I think, who said, that a bachelor is like the one half of a pair of scissors ; useless without the other.

country you may get married, and have a family of young bairns about you. If you are happy, there they are to share your happiness; and if you are otherwise—there they are to comfort you.”

No parent can be wholly wretched, let his fate be what it may, if his children are about him, with their cheeks tinged with health. It is sweet to be surrounded by those whom we dearly love, and who love us in return beyond all the world. There is no music so delightful as the sound of a child's affectionate voice—no sight so cheering as its little happy face. But alas! in this comfortless and uncongenial clime,* the forlorn English exile must too generally forego these domestic pleasures. It is indeed a terrible deprivation. This is the unkindest cut of all. It is the stroke that goes most directly to the heart.

It is not the mere absence alone that constitutes the bitter trial, but a consciousness of the vast intervening distance. The parent and the child are divided from each other by a world of waters. They live in different spheres. The death of a child would scarcely seem a heavier doom than such a separation. In the one case there is an end of all doubt, suspense and fear; but in the other, there are feverish hopes and hideous apprehensions. The mother dreams incessantly of her distant child, for whom she tremblingly anticipates every ill that flesh is heir to. If sometimes in a happier moment she soothes her soul with brighter fancies, and sees her dear offspring wandering in careless happiness about the same green spots that are hallowed by her own earliest associations, the delight is neither lasting nor unalloyed.

“Oh! there is e'en a happiness that makes the heart afraid.”

This sweet picture of the imagination is soon contrasted with the drear reality of her own position, and the possible difference of her child's actual fate, from that presented by her flattering dreams. The re-action of the mind is fearful. “That way madness lies.” A state of exile is every way unnatural, and breaks humanity's divinest links. The spirit of domestic happiness rarely wanders far from her native hearth.

The generous and chivalric protection which men bestow upon the feebler but fairer sex, is allied in some degree to the feeling which we cherish towards a child. The graceful and trusting helplessness of both is flattering to our pride, and is an appeal to our love that is utterly irresistible. He who has a large family of children, is necessarily conscious of an agreeable self-importance. If he has the means of

* India.

supporting them, they cannot be too numerous. His children are so many re-creations of himself. They are ties that must bind his affections to the world, and yet solace him in his latest hour, for a man cannot wholly die while his children live. He has spread out his existence into different channels. When he looks upon his little divided lives, he feels not the effect of age so palpably as he who is solitary and childless. He beholds in them the "lovely April of his prime."

"This is to be new made when he is old,
And see his blood warm when he feels it cold."

When the wedded lose a partner, the dead parent is still present in the child. It is a living miniature of the departed. It is pleasant, when we become conscious of the defiling influence of the world, and feel the cold blasts of care, to see ourselves reflected in a fairer form in the bright faces of our children. They suggest the purest and sweetest thoughts. They are beautiful in themselves, and like the fresh buds of spring are full of precious promise of blossoms and of shelter. He whose evening of life is cherished and adorned by a lovely cluster of kindred faces, may well exult in his latter state, whatever may have been the trials and deprivations of his earlier hours.

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SONNET.

ON HEARING CAPTAIN JAMES GLENCAIRN BURNS SING
(IN INDIA) HIS FATHER'S SONGS.

How dream-like is the sound of native song
Heard on a foreign shore! The wanderer's ear
Drinks wild enchantment,—swiftly fade the drear
And cold realities that round him throng,
While in the sweet delirium, deep and strong,
The past is present and the distant near!
Such sound is sacred ever,—doubly dear
When heard by patriot exiles parted long
From all that love hath hallowed. But a spell
Ev'n yet more holy breathes in every note
Now trembling on my heart. *A proud Son sings*
The lay of BURNS! Oh! what imaginings
Awake, as o'er a foreign region float
These filial echoes of the father's shell!

Calcutta, August 7, 1833.

A SOLDIER'S DREAM.

THE fearful strife had ceased—the foe had fled—
 And shouts arose of mockery and joy,
 As the loud trumpet's wild exulting voice
 Proclaimed the victory! With weary tread,
 But spirits light and free, the victors passed
 On to the neighbouring citadel. Nor deemed,
 Nor recked they, in that moment's pride, of aught
 But glory won. Or if a tender thought
 Recalled the fallen brave, 'twas like the cloud
 On summer's radiant brow—a flitting shade.

Yet on the battle-plain how many lay,
 In their last dreamless sleep! Some too were there
 Who struggled still within the mighty grasp
 Of that stern conqueror—Death. The fearful throes
 Of parting life, at intervals, would wring,
 E'en from the proudest heart, the piercing cry
 Of mortal agony.

In pain I sunk,
 Worn and disabled, 'mid the dead and dying.
 Night's shadows were around,—the sickly moon,
 Dim and discoloured, rose, as if she mourned
 To gaze upon a scene so fraught with woe!

And there was one who passed me at this hour,
 A form familiar to my memory
 From long-departed years. For we had met
 In early youth, with feelings unconcealed,
 And passions unrepressed. E'en then he seemed
 The bane of every joy. His brow grew dark
 At boyhood's happy voice and guileless smile,
 As though they mocked him! Now he sternly marked
 My well-remembered face, yet lingered not.
 There was a taunt upon his haughty lip,
 A fiery language in his scowling eye,
 My proud heart ill could brook!

E'en like a vision of the fevered brain,
 His image haunted me—and urged to madness,—
 And when my wearied limbs were locked in sleep,
 The blood-red sod, my couch—the tempest-cloud,

My canopy—my bed-fellows, the dead—
 My lullaby, the moaning midnight wind—
 I had a dream—a strange bewildered dream—
 And *he* was with me !

Methought I heard the hollow voice of Death
 Tell of another world, while awful shrieks
 Of wild despair, and agony, and dread,
 Shook the dark vault of heaven !—Suddenly
 Deep silence came,—and all the scene was changed !
 Insufferable radiance glared around,
 And pained the dazzled eye. In robes of light,
 High on a gorgeous throne, appeared a Form
 Of pure celestial glory ! In deep awe
 A silent, vast, innumerable throng
 Of earth-freed warriors bowed. The Form sublime,
 In these benign and memorable words,
 Now hailed the kneeling crowd—"Ye who have owned
 Religion for your Leader, and have loved
 The family of Man, and toiled and bled
 For Liberty and Justice ! Ye have fought
 A glorious fight, and gained a glorious meed—
 A bright inheritance of endless joy,
 A home of endless rest !"

At this, flashed forth,
 With lineaments divinely beautiful,
 Fair shapes of bright-wing'd beings, holy guides
 To realms of everlasting peace and love !

But ah ! how few of that surrounding host
 Were led to happier worlds ! The chosen band
 In sacred light departed ; and the form
 That sat upon the throne, then slowly rose
 With darkened brow, and majesty severe,
 And this dread judgment gave—
 "He that can love not Man loves not his God !
 And lo ! his image ye have dared to mar
 In hate and exultation, and for this
 Shall ruthless strife, and agonies untold,
 Be your eternal doom !"

And now with horrid laughter mixed with yells
 More terrible than shuddering Fancy hears
 Raising strange echoes in the charnel vault,
 Uprose grim Fiends of Hell, and urged us on,
 Through paths of hideous gloom, till like the sea

At night, wide shown beneath the lightning's glare,
 A boundless plain quick burst upon the view !
 In the dim distance glittered shafts of war ;—
 Wild Horror's cry, and Hate's delirious shout,
 The din of strife, and shrieks of agony,
 Came on the roaring blast ! A mighty voice,
 Piercing the dissonance infernal, cried,
 "*On to the Hell of Battle!*" These dread words,
 Like sudden thunder, startled and dismayed
 Each quailing warrior's soul. But soon despair
 Was wrought to frenzy, and we madly rushed,
 To join the strife of demons !

One alone

Amid that countless throng now caught mine eye !
 His was the form I loved not in my youth,
 And cursed in after years. We fiercely met,—
 A wild thrust reached him. Then he loudly shrieked,
 And Death's relieving hand besought in vain,
 Where Death could never come ! With quenchless rage,
 And strength untamed, on his triumphant foe,
 Again he turned !—but *he* was victor now ;—
 And in unutterable pain—I woke !

'Twas morning—and the sun's far-levelled rays
 Gleamed on the ghastly brows and stiffened limbs
 Of those that slumbered—ne'er to wake again !

SONNET.

DEAR G——, old friendships are a welcome theme,
 Yet mournful ever, for o'er bright years fled
 We muse, and call up faces of the dead,
 And pleasures past and many an early dream.
 Then the long voyage on Life's mystic stream
 Seems all too brief—we turn and gaze a-head
 And watch the dim night gradually spread,
 While yet our wake is tinged with golden gleam.
 How bland the breeze, how beautiful the wave,
 We never felt as now, when o'er the sky
 Sweet day begins to fade, and time's swift tide
 Hath brought us nearer to that ocean wide—
 Eternity—of mortal dreams the grave—
 Vast treasury of the things that may not die !

BULWER AND THE MODERN NOVELISTS, AND STERNE AND GOLDSMITH.

BULWER, in his two latest works of prose fiction, "*My Novel; or, Varieties of English Life*, and *The Caxtons*, has ventured to enter occasionally upon the domain of Sterne. We are not altogether sorry for this, because those critics, who in their admiration of the writers of the present day have begun to look with contempt upon the writers of the past century, will now see that he, whom many regard as the first of living novelists, is reduced to comparative insignificance when he places himself by the side of the author of *Tristram Shandy*. Bulwer is a brilliant writer and marvellously prolific. Sterne and Goldsmith make but a poor display upon the book-shelf beside the author of *Pelham* and *The Disowned*, and *Devereux*, and *Paul Clifford* and *Rienzi*, and *The Last Days of Pompeii*, and *Ernest Maltravers* and *Alice, or the Mysteries*, &c. &c. If mere quantity instead of quality were the measure of literary merit, Sterne and Goldsmith would hide their diminished heads. But for our own part, we would rather have been the author of the little story of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, or of *Tristram Shandy*, than of all Bulwer's writings, put together, even if they were not only doubled in quantity but increased four-fold in value. And yet we mean not to speak contemptuously of Bulwer. Far from it. Put aside Dickens, and Bulwer stands at the head of the living writers of prose fiction. And there is a vast deal of talent now employed on this branch of literature. His position is high and enviable, and his powers are unquestionably great and varied. But still with all his undoubted capabilities and accomplishments, we question whether he has created one single character that is familiar to the public mind. His novels have the same sort of interest and the same transitory effect, as a gorgeous melo-drama, which almost as soon as it is over is forgotten. But he who has once read Goldsmith and Sterne has formed an acquaintance for life with the Vicar and his family, with Dr. Slop, and my Uncle Toby and the Corporal.

As we accuse Bulwer of trenching on the ground of Sterne, it will be but fair if we present some proof of the justice of the charge. Let us first then give Sterne's celebrated donkey-scene. If the reader has perused it twelve times before, he will, we dare say, have no objection to turn the twelve into a baker's dozen. It shall be followed by a chapter from Bulwer:—

A Chapter from Sterne.

'Twas by a poor ass, who had just turned in with a couple of large panniers upon his back, to collect eleemosynary turnip-tops and cabbage-leaves; and

stood dubious, with his two fore-feet on the inside of the threshold, and with his two hinder-feet towards the street, as not knowing very well whether he was to go in or no.

Now, 'tis an animal (be'n what hurry I may) I cannot bear to strike—there is a patient endurance of sufferings, wrote so unaffectedly in his *lo* and carriage, which pleads so mightily for him, that it always disarms me; and to that degree, that I do not like to speak unkindly to him: on the contrary, meet him where I will,—whether in town or country,—in cart or under panniers,—whether in liberty or bondage,—I have ever something civil to say to him on my part; and as one word begets another (if he has as little to do as I)—I generally fall into conversation with him; and surely never is my imagination so busy as in framing his responses from the etchings of his countenance, and where those carry me not deep enough,—in flying from my own heart into his, and seeing what is natural for an ass to think,—as well as a man, upon the occasion. In truth, it is the only creature of all the classes of beings below me, with whom I can do this; for parrots, jackdaws, &c., I never exchange a word with them,—nor with apes, &c., for pretty nearly the same reason; they that act by rote, as the others speak by it, and equally make me silent: nay, my dog and my cat, though I value them both—(and for my dog, he would speak if he could)—yet, somehow or other, they neither of them possess the talents for conversation;—I can make nothing of a discourse with them beyond the *proposition*, the *reply* and *rejoinder*, which terminated my father's and my mother's conversations in his beds of justice;—and those utter'd,—there's an end of the dialogue.

But with an ass, I can commune for ever.

"Come Honesty" said I,—seeing it was impracticable to pass betwixt him and the gate; art thou for coming in or going out?

"The ass twisted his head round, to look up the street.

"Well," replied I, "we'll wait a minute for thy driver."

He turned his head thoughtfully about, and looked wistfully the opposite way.

"I understand thee perfectly," answered I; "if thou takest a wrong step in this affair, he will cudgel thee to death.—Well, a minute is but a minute, and if it saves a fellow-creature a drubbing, it shall not be set down as ill-spent."

He was eating the stem of an artichoke as this discourse went on, and, in the little peevish contentions of nature betwixt hunger and unsavouriness, had dropt it out of his mouth half-a-dozen times, and pick'd it up again.—God help the Jack," said I, "thou hast a bitter breakfast on't—and many a bitter day's labour,—and many a bitter blow, I fear, for its wages—'tis all—all bitterness to thee whatever life is.—And now, thy mouth, if one knew the truth of it, is as bitter I dare say as soot—(for he had cast aside the stem)—and thou hast not a friend, perhaps, in all this world, that will give thee a macaroon."—In saying this, I pull'd out a paper of 'em, which I had just purchased, and gave him one,—and at this moment that I am telling it, my heart smites me, that there was more of pleasantry in the conceit, of seeing *how* an ass would eat a macaroon, than of benevolence in giving him one, presidid in the act.

When the ass had eaten his macaroon, I press'd him to come in:—the poor beast was heavy loaded,—his legs seemed to tremble under him,—he hung rather backwards; and as I pull'd at his halter, it broke short in my hand.—He look'd up pensive in my face—"Don't thrash me with it;—but, if you will, you may."—"If I do," said I, "I'll be d—d—d."

A Chapter from Bulwer.

"There has never been occasion to use them since I've been in the parish," said Parson Dale.

"What does that prove?" quoth the Squire sharply, and looking the parson full in the face.

"Prove?" repeated Mr. Dale—with a smile of benign, yet too conscious superiority.—"What does experience prove?"

"That your forefathers were great blockheads, and that their descendant is not a whit the wiser."

"Squire," replied the Parson, "although that is a melancholy conclusion, yet if you mean it to apply universally, and not to the family of the Dales in particular, it is not one which my candour as a reasoner, and my humility as a mortal, will permit me to challenge."

"I defy you," said Mr. Hazeldean triumphantly. "But to stick to the subject, which it is monstrous hard to do when one talks with a Parson, I only just ask you to look yonder, and tell me on your conscience—I don't even say as a Parson, but as a Parishioner—whether you ever saw a more disreputable spectacle?"

While he spoke, the Squire, leaning heavily on the Parson's left shoulder, extended his cane in a line parallel with the right eye of that disputatious ecclesiastic, so that he might guide the organ of sight to the object he had thus unflatteringly described.

"I confess," said the Parson, "that regarded by the eye of the senses, it is a thing that in its best day had small pretensions to beauty, and is not elevated into the Picturesque even by neglect and decay. But my friend, regarded by the eye of the inner man—of the rural philosopher and parochial legislator—I say it is by neglect and decay that it is rendered a very pleasing feature in what I may call 'the moral topography of a parish.'"

The Squire looked at the Parson as if he could have beaten him; and indeed regarding the object in dispute not only with the eye of the outer man, but the eye of law and order, the eye of a country gentleman and a justice of the peace, the spectacle was scandalously disreputable. It was moss-grown; it was worm-eaten; it was broken right in the middle; through its four sockless eyes, neighboured by the nettle, peered the thistle:—the thistle! a forest of thistles!—and, to complete the degradation of the whole, those thistles had attracted the donkey of an itinerant tinker: and the irreverent animal was in the very act of taking his luncheon out of the eyes and jaws of—THE PARISH STOCKS.

The Squire looked as if he could have beaten the Parson; but as he was not without some slight command of temper, and a substitute was luckily at hand, he gulped down his resentment and made a rush—at the donkey!

Now the donkey was hampered by a rope to its fore-feet, to which was attached a billet of wood called technically "a clog," so that it had no fair chance of escape from the assault its sacrilegious luncheon had justly provoked. But the ass turning round with usual nimbleness at the first stroke of the cane, the Squire caught his foot in the rope, and went head-over-heels among the thistles. The donkey gravely bent down, and thrice smelt or sniffed its prostrate foe; then, having convinced itself that it had nothing farther to apprehend for the present and very willing to make the best of the reprieve, according to the poetical admonition, "Gather your rose-buds while you may," it cropped a thistle in full bloom, close to the ear of the Squire; so close indeed, that the Parson thought the ear was gone; and with the more probability, inasmuch as the Squire, feeling the warm breath of the creature, bellowed out with all the force of lungs accustomed to give a View-hallo!

"Bless me, it is gone?" said the Parson, thrusting his person between the ass and the Squire.

"Zounds and the devil!" cried the Squire, rubbing himself as he rose to his feet.

"Hush," said the Parson gently, "what a horrible oath!"

"Horrible oath! If you had my nankeens on," said the Squire, still rubbing himself, "and had fallen into a thicket of thistles with a donkey's teeth within an inch of your ear!"

"It is not gone—then?" interrupted the Parson.

"No—that is, I think not," said the Squire dubiously; and he clapped his hand to the organ in question; "no, it is not gone!"

"Thank heaven!" said the good clergymen kindly.

"Hm," growled the Squire, who was now once more engaged in rubbing himself. "Thank heaven indeed, when I am as full of thorns as a porcupine! I should just like to know what use thistles are in the world."

"For donkeys to eat, if you will let them, Squire," answered the Parson.

"Ugh, you beast!" cried Mr. Hazeldean, all his wrath re-awakened, whether by the reference to the donkey species, or his inability to reply to the Parson, or perhaps by some sudden prick too sharp for humanity—especially humanity in nankeens—to endure without kicking; "Ugh, you beast!" he exclaimed, shaking his cane at the donkey, who at the interposition of the Parson had respectfully recoiled a few paces, and now stood switching its thin tail and trying vainly to lift one of its fore-legs—for the flies teased it.

"Poor thing!" said the Parson, pityingly. "See, it has a raw place on the shoulder, and the flies have found out the sore."

"I am devilish glad to hear it," said the Squire vindictively.

"Fie, fie!"

"It is very well to say 'Fie, fie.' It was not you who fell among the thistles. —What's the man about now I wonder?"

This is obviously a very studied imitation of the manner of Sterne, and yet by no means a happy one. It is an unintentional caricature of the original. But there is more of the same sort of matter in which the imitation almost extends to the sin of plagiarism:—

The Parson had walked toward a chestnut tree that stood on the village green—he broke off a bough—returned to the donkey—whisked away the flies, and then tenderly placed the broad leaves over the sore, as a protection from the swarms. The donkey turned round its head, and looked at him with mild wonder.

"I would bet a shilling," said the Parson, softly, "that this is the first act of kindness thou hast met with this many a day, and slight enough it is. Heaven knows."

With that the Parson put his hand into his pocket and drew out an apple. It was a fine large rose-checked apple; one of the last winter's store, from the celebrated tree in the Parsonage garden, and he was taking it as a present to a little boy in the village who had notably distinguished himself in the Sunday school. "Nay, in common justice, Lenny Fairfield should have the preference," muttered the Parson. The ass pricked up one of its ears, and advanced its head timidly. "But Lenny Fairfield would be as much pleased with two-pence; and what could two-pence do to thee?" The ass's nose now touched the apple. "Take it in the name of Charity," quoth the Parson; "Justice is accustomed to be served last." And the ass took the apple. "How had you the heart?" said the Parson, pointing to the Squire's cane.

The ass stopped munching, and looked askant at the Squire.

"Pooh! eat on; he'll not beat thee now!"

"No," said the Squire apologetically. But, after all, he is not an Ass of the Parish; he is a vagrant, and he ought to be pounded. But the pound is in as bad a state as the stocks, thanks to your new-fashioned doctrines."

The apple in Bulwer supplies the place of the macaroon in Sterne:—

And at this moment that I am telling it, my heart smites me, that there was more pleasantry in the conceit of seeing how an ass would eat a macaroon, than of benevolence in giving him one, which presided in the act.—*Sterne*.

Lenny's face became all smile; his interest was aroused.

"And did the donkey like the apple?"—*Bulwer*.

Here is another of Bulwer's imitations of the Donkey-scene in Sterne:—

The Parson jumped from the stile and looking over the hedge that divided the field from the road—"Gently, gently," said he; "the sound of the stick spoils the singing! O Mr. Sprott, Mr. Sprott! a good man is merciful to his beast."

The donkey seemed to recognise the voice of its friend, for it stopped short, pricked one ear wistfully, and looked up.

The tinker touched his hat, and looked up too. "Lord bless your reverence! he does not mind it, he likes it. I would not hurt thee; would I, Neddy?"

The donkey shook his head and shivered; perhaps a fly had settled on the sore, which the chestnut leaves no longer protected.

Now for a specimen of Bulwer's imitations of Sterne's

quaint moral soliloquies and reflections on trifling incidents :—

He had just crossed the stile, when he heard hast^y but timorous feet behind him. He turned, and saw his friend Lenny.

Lenny, half crying, and holding out the six-pence—"Indeed, sir, I would rather not. I would have given all to the Neddy."

Parson—"Why, then, my man, you have a still greater right to the six-pence."

Lenny—"No, sir ; 'cause you only gave it to make up for the half apple. And if I had given the whole, as I ought to have done, why, I should have had no right to the six-pence. Please, sir, don't be offended ; do take it back, will you ?"

The Parson hesitated. And the boy thrust the six-pence into his hand, as the ass had poked his nose there before in quest of the apple.

"I see," said Parson Dale, soliloquising, "that if one don't give Justice the first place at the table, all the other Virtues eat up her share."

Indeed, the case was perplexing. Charity, like a forward impudent baggage as she is, always thrusting herself in the way, and taking other people's apples to make her own little pic, had defrauded Lenny of his due ; and now Susceptibility, who looks like a shy, blush-faced, awkward Virtue in her teens—but who, nevertheless, is always engaged in picking the pockets of her sisters, tried to filch from him his lawful recompense. The case was perplexing ; for the Parson held Susceptibility in great honour, despite her hypocritical tricks, and did not like to give her a slap in the face, which might frighten her away for ever. So Mr. Dale stood irresolute, glancing from the six-pence to Lenny, and from Lenny to the six-pence.

"Imagine to yourself," says Sterne, in his abrupt and peculiar style, "a little squat uncourtly figure of a Doctor Slop," &c. Bulwer, aiming at the same abrupt style, introduces a figure that is the exact opposite of the broad-backed Doctor, with his "sesquipedality of belly"—a Dr. Riccabocca :—

Imagine a tall and exceedingly meagre man, dressed in a rusty suit of black—the pantaloons tight at the calf and there forming a loose gaiter over thick shoes buckled high at the instep, &c. &c.

We feel the perusal of most of the recent novels a sheer waste of time and attention. They leave no impression. They add nothing to our intellectual stores. It is very melancholy that so much genuine talent should be exhausted on works that the world will let die. We can hardly imagine a sadder sight than the back-stock store-rooms of a Colburn or a Bentley. We there behold vast piles of printed papers prepared with considerable ability and great labour, and with an eager thirst for fame. Many of these were hailed as immortal productions of genius on their first appearance—and now they are destined for the pastry-cook and the box-maker. Generally speaking, a novel is transferred to the ware-house of dead-stock six months after its birth. Of the five hundred living novelists of Great Britain, only a dozen or two have the happiness to see their works pass into a second edition. And how few alas ! of the most fortunate even of these productions, may be looked upon as permanent additions to the literature of the country !

The clever, brilliant, *rhetorical* composition of a Bulwer will hardly stand the test of ages. It does not seem meant for posterity. It is too *flashy*. And yet amidst a sort of hot-bed luxuriance of exotic flowers—a glare and glitter—a too ostentatious display of the resources of art—there are occasionally fine traits of truth and nature, keen and subtle observations, and passages of genuine eloquence and pathos. It is impossible for the most prejudiced reader to deny that the author is a greatly gifted and most accomplished person; and yet many who acknowledge his high pretensions have a feeling of hostility towards him.

The majority of his readers are apt to fancy, that even in his gravest scenes he is not thoroughly in earnest. It is suspected that, like Lord Byron, he is an aristocrat at heart though a liberal in theory—that his sentimentality is a mask—that in reality he is an egotist, a satirist, and a hard man of the world. How far these impressions against him have any real foundation: whether they are partly true or wholly false; whether they have been produced by the representations of ungenerous enemies, literary or political, or are the result of the internal evidence of his own writings, or of revelations of his private life, we shall not pretend to determine.

A recent writer has asserted “that no one in these days reads Sterne, unless it be some octogenarian country squire, or weather-bound traveller, for lack of other employment.” This is far from being the case, or we should not see edition after edition of Sterne’s works still issuing from the press. No man who pretends to an acquaintance with the literature of England, has omitted to read the English Rabelais, and most of the leading critics of this century have expressed their admiration of his genius. Coleridge has alluded to the exquisite combination of humour and pathos in the pages of Sterne, and commented on some of his principal characters. “Sterne,” says Carlyle, “is our *last* specimen of humour, and with all his faults, our *best*. “The story of *Lefevre*,” observes Hazlitt, “is perhaps the finest in the English language.” “He who created thee, divine Uncle Toby,” exclaims Leigh Hunt, “was the wisest man since the days of Shakespeare.” “In the power of approaching and touching the finer feelings of the heart,” says Sir Walter Scott, “Sterne has never been excelled, *if indeed he has ever been equalled*.” Mackenzie, and Southey and Bulwer have all paid Lawrence Sterne the compliment of imitation. And yet the writer just alluded to assures us that “*Tristram Shandy is a clumsy compound of buffoonery, pedantry and obscurity—in about equal proportions*.” “We have never,” he continues, “been able to perceive the humour or the pathos which are believed to

be the characteristics of the story." Whose fault is this—the author or his critic's?

That Sterne is a singularly unequal writer, his warmest admirers must admit. But so was Shakespeare—the greatest and worst poet that ever lived. Sterne abandoned himself entirely to every eccentric movement of his heart and mind. He was never afraid of uttering nonsense. But the nonsense of Sterne was the nonsense of a man of genius. "*Most men,*" says Southey, "*play the fool in some way or other, and no man takes more delight in playing it than I do, in my own way.*" Sterne does that in public which other men only dare to do in private; the frankest speakers are often amongst the wisest and the most delightful of our associates, and the charm of perfect ease and freedom in print, where the author is expected to measure his words with a guarded precision, and to formalize his feelings, is enhanced by its rarity and the sensation of pleasurable surprize. The reader is complimented by the confidence of a man of genius, and perhaps is not altogether displeased to have his intellectual superior sometimes at a disadvantage. But if this be occasionally a relief to the reader's sense of the author's greatness, it also gives a zest to his relish of the finest passages. Sterne loses nothing with his admirer by condescending now and then to be on terms of equality with him, or in fact in his sportful extravagances to be somewhat below him; as wise teachers, by a cordial familiarity and a temporary forgetfulness of their own official dignity and pretensions, win the love of their pupils in the play-ground. An author who treats us thus familiarly, more readily obtains that hearty sympathy which makes us in some degree identify our interests with his own, until we almost fancy, in the consciousness of close companionship, that some sparks of his genius, some few rays of his glory, extend to ourselves; just as men in private life seem to cherish a sense of property in the greatness of those with whom they are intimately connected by family ties, by accidental associations, or by a similarity of pursuits.

There is no better test of genius than the creation of even a single character that is perfectly distinct, original and true. If Sterne had created no other character than that of *My Uncle Toby*, he would still have been worthy of everlasting remembrance. But what a delightful family group of genuine originals fill up the canvass of this inimitable painter with forms that once seen can never be forgotten! Their very names act as a charm upon us, and even in our least genial moods, tend to reconcile us to ourselves and to human nature. The simple-minded, gentle-hearted *Uncle Toby*, and the metaphysical *Mr. Shandy*, and poor *Yorick*, and *Ma-*

ria, and the *Monk*, and the honest *Corporal* and *Susannah*, and even the obstetric *Dr. Slop*, himself, like the characters in Shakespeare, form an inestimable extension of every reading man's circle of familiar acquaintance. *Uncle Toby* would have been worthy of Shakespeare himself, who though he has shown humour of a broader kind, as in Falstaff, has given us no example of ludicrous eccentricity connected with a high sense of honour, true virtue, a hero's courage, a feminine gentleness and delicacy and purity of nature, and the guileless simplicity of a child. The great dramatist's characters of humour have little sentiment. To speak frankly, but not irreverently, perhaps wit and humour were not amongst Shakespeare's chief endowments, though Gifford has asserted that wit was Shakespeare's main excellence, and the *only quality* in which he was superior to all other writers. This seems to us a great mistake, for Shakespeare's wit, though sometimes truly exquisite, too often consists of a mere play upon words, far-fetched illustrations, affected quaintnesses, hard subtle distinctions, and strained meanings. Dr. Johnson says that a quibble is to Shakespeare the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career. His humour, though frequently rich, and racy and irresistible, is less refined and subtle than that of Cervantes, Addison, and Sterne, as in *Don Quixote*, *Sir Roger de Coverley* and *My Uncle Toby*. His tragedy is at a far greater elevation than his comedy above the works of other dramatic writers. Lear, Hamlet, Macbeth and Othello are the noblest illustrations of his mighty genius. It is in his general knowledge of human nature, his representations of the passions, and in his power over the deeper feelings that Shakespeare most conspicuously surpasses every writer that the world has yet known; and he will, in all probability, continue to hold a similar pre-eminence to the end of time.

But if Shakespeare's humour is less refined and subtle than that of some later writers, it is more so than that of any one of his English contemporaries. It is, perhaps, only in certain states of society, that the finest characteristics of the faculty of humour can be developed.

Sterne has been characterized as an unscrupulous plagiarist, "indebted for every thing, *with one exception*, to former writers." "There is *one thing*," adds his hostile critic, "which was all his own, and in which he is entirely and unapproachably original—we mean his obscenity." Now Sterne's great model, Rabelais, was not only infinitely more indecent, but actually *filthy*; so also was Swift. It must be confessed that Sterne too often sins against conventional decencies and proprieties; but though he calls up a blush upon the cheek of

modesty, he never turns our stomach or places humanity in a position to make us loath it. Though there are passages and phrases in Sterne unfit for the perusal of a lady of the present time, we are to recollect that the fair sex in his own day were accustomed to the enjoyment of works which are now carefully excluded from every boudoir. If Fielding and Smollett are, upon the whole, a little more select and guarded in their particular expressions and allusions, their superior scrupulosity is little more than verbal; it is chiefly on the surface; they are less pure below. Sterne's errors involve rather a question of manners than of morals. These are too often confounded by the world. There are ladies who would be less shocked by *Don Juan* than by *Tristram Shandy*. Fielding and Smollett are inferior to Sterne in that inner refinement which need not be essentially affected by every change in the manners of society. The general impression left on a young reader's mind by some of the scenes in *Tom Jones* and *Peregrine Pickle*, is infinitely more perilous to his virtue than the jests and inuendoes in *Tristram Shandy*. With respect to the several heroes, there can be no question as to which are most worthy of the love and admiration of a moral reader. But not only for Sterne's sake, but in justice even to Fielding and Smollett, we must bear in mind that since their day there has been a considerable change in the tone of polite society, and that if they had lived now, they would in all probability have adapted their writings to the better taste of our time.

Let us remember too, that as even the finest specimens of humanity are not immaculate, nor the same at all hours, we must judge a fellow-creature not by the occasional stains, but by the predominant colour of his mind.

We do not admire Sterne for his "obscenity." We should indeed deserve the contempt and abhorrence of our readers if we could feel and avow, that in admiring the creator of such characters as *My Uncle Toby* and *The Corporal*, the charm of his works lay not in their pathos and their humour but their obscenity. Sterne's extravagant nonsense, his fantastic buffoonery, are often entertaining, but his coarseness and indecency are never so—they must always be offensive to every mind that is not thoroughly depraved. We detest these sins quite as heartily as any one, and if they predominated in Sterne, we should fling away his works with scorn and disgust. The literature of the last two hundred years has not been enriched with more charming portraits of human virtue (not of mere abstract qualities—mere angels clad in flesh and blood) than we owe to the imagination of the author of *Tristram Shandy*. Could such a mind as his be wholly deprav-

ed? Most certainly *not*. That so fine a nature, from the habit of defying the conventional rules of society, should have occasionally slipped into improprieties of allusion and language, is a matter rather of regret than wonder.* But no man is without his faults; and there are few who would not suffer more than Sterne, if, like him, they were to unveil their hearts, and expose their innermost frailties to the eyes of the world.

For where's that place whereinto foul things
Sometimes intrude not? Who has a breast so pure,
But some uncleanly apprehensions
Keep leets and law-days, and in session sit
With meditations lawful?

When we refer to Shakespeare's excellencies, we think not of his quibbles, his bombast, his indecency. We remember only his marvellous truth, his sublimity and his pathos. When we refer to Sterne with expressions of admiration, we remember not the occasional stains upon his pages, but his incomparable pictures of the most loveable human virtue, his passages of refined sentiment, of profound pathos, and of most genial humour. These are uppermost in our mind when we speak of Yorick.

It is a great mistake to suppose Sterne an essentially *immoral* writer. The laws of *morality* are eternal and universal; those of *decency* are temporary and local. Sterne often

* Southey was certainly as purely minded a man as any of our recent writers, and yet even he, in his *Doctor*, though living in a delicate and scrupulous age, has not produced pages perfectly spotless. The *Quarterly Review* charges him with "a mountain of dross and rubbish," in which we have to search for his gold and gems, and speaks of "his right merry and conceited elaboration of one of the dirtiest of all the practical jokes in Rabelais!" The reviewer seems to rank the humour of *Tristram Shandy* as much above that of the *Doctor*, which is an imitation of it, as we have elevated the humour of Sterne above that of Bulwer.

"One very important particular in Sterne's *plan*," says the reviewer, "with all its wildness, stands contrasted to its own infinite advantage against that of its anonymous imitator. The strange farrago of odd, yet often second-hand learning for the purpose of exhibiting which *Tristram Shandy* was, no doubt, first conceived, is all, by the art of Sterne, poured out *dramatically*; the character of *My Father* is a most original conception, most happily worked out with a skill which can convert materials, apparently the most incongruous to the one main design; and the same may be said of *Slop*. 'The *Doctor*' seems to have been framed with exactly the same primary view—that of framing a pretext for the clearance of a rich common-place book, but the author after a few awkward attempts to avail himself, for this purpose of the instrumentality of his hero's father and tutor, takes the office of Showman into his own hands, and thenceforth the 'curiosities of Literature,' of which 'the *Doctor* presents' certainly a sequence not unworthy of being classed with D'Israeli's charming one, or with Southey's *Omniana*, are brought forth so as hardly to help in any degree the development of any one of the characters in the book."

The *Quarterly Reviewer*, when writing this notice, was not aware that Southey, though suspected, was the actual author of *The Doctor*. Indeed with a confidence that now seems laughable, he insists that Southey himself was ignorant of the author! "*We happen to know*," says the reviewer, "that he (Southey) was ignorant of the real author of the book." Amongst the several authors to whom "*The Doctor*" was at first attributed, were D'Israeli, Mr. Frere, Hartley Coleridge and Sir Egerton Brydges.

offends the sense of propriety peculiar to England in the 19th century—and indeed he sometimes sins against the *good taste* of all civilized ages—but he never varnishes crime or confounds the limits of vice and virtue. If, to make every noble quality attractive, and every base one hateful, be a high moral task, Sterne is amongst the best of our moralists. He humanizes nobly. "*My Uncle Toby*," says Hazlitt, "is one of the finest compliments ever paid to human nature."

Let us compare Sterne with Swift—the one so genial, gentle, generous, and loving; the other, so cold, sarcastic, and contemptuous; the one a believer in all good, the other a believer in all evil; the one making us love mankind and putting us in good humour with our common nature, the other teaching us to mistrust and hate and despise the world and all that it contains. If Sterne is sometimes indecent, Swift is often filthy. And yet Swift has not been called an immoral writer, though Sterne has. In point of genius, Sterne has a decided superiority. Swift, indeed, surpasses him in wit and irony, but in pathos and humour, and all the finer attributes of intellect, Sterne bears the palm. Swift has created no characters. He is a mere satirist. Sterne is the most dramatic of our prose writers. His pictures are wonderfully individual and distinct; and yet always true in the leading features to our general nature. As it is with some great master of the pictorial art, so it is with Sterne: his slightest and apparently most careless and unstudied touches tell powerfully on the general effect. Trifles light as air become in *his* hands traits of character—confirmations strong of certain idiosyncrasies of mind and heart. He traces with an unerring eye all those small and subtle indications of character which at first escape the multitude, though their truth is felt by the most ordinary observer the moment that his attention is directed to them.

Sterne has obviously no turn for the mere construction of a fable. He makes, indeed, no pretension whatever to that sort of merit. He gives us no grand epic; not even a regularly arranged gallery of pictures. He laughs at all order and formality. But his individual scenes and portraits are often exquisitely finished. They all too have a moral, more or less distinctly developed. He is a far finer moralist than many an English author who is in the first rank of the orthodox. He is certainly, for example, a more moral writer than the author of *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*. He has no scenes that kindle a sensual imagination like those of that writer who, Johnson so pompously and erroneously tells us, has taught the passions to move at the command of virtue! *Virtue rewarded*, indeed! Is the hand of a rich profligate who has

repeatedly attempted to dishonour her both by force and fraud, a fit recompense for all the anxieties of a persecuted woman who has been indebted to the most marvellously fortunate accidents for her hair-breadth escapes from his treachery and violence?

This favourite moral writer, the author of *VIRTUE REWARDED*, delights in descriptions that no young reader with the blood warm in his veins can read with safe emotion. His pictures of the sexual passion, from their thin veil of false refinement, are far more seductive than the coarsest productions of the brothel. The heroine of the novel just alluded to, is made to carry her pearl of chastity to the best market, to love and honour an unprincipled scoundrel who had attempted to rob her of the treasure of which she so well knows the worldly value; rejecting an honest clergyman's more honourable proposals, who had no defect but the want of wealth; and preferring a fellow who, if his intended crime had been accomplished, would have been liable to the penalty of the gallows. If Sterne had been guilty of such an offence against true morality, as the story of *Pamela*, he could hardly have complained had his name become a by-word of baseness. But the case very faithfully exemplifies the melancholy fact that it is safer to set at defiance the eternal principles of truth and right than to sin against those small proprieties which are all in all with the formalists of society. Sterne never identifies these conventionalisms with the substantial virtues of life. He never makes mere wealth respectable, in spite of vice, nor impresses his readers with a greater regard for external circumstances and appearances than the essential qualities of the heart or mind. Neither does he, like Bulwer or Byron, make a hero of a highway robber, a murderer, a pirate, or a London fop. There are in Sterne's theatre no real reprobates made to figure as patterns of humanity; no *Paul Clifords* and *Eugene Arams*, and *Corsairs* and *Pelhams*. There is scarcely a single character, in his inspired pages, that a good and wise man would be ashamed to love. Sterne's soul was filled with images of truth and virtue. His *dramatis personæ* have many harmless and amusing weaknesses and inconsistencies, but no vices. It is true that the righteous-over-much would find it hard to tolerate the toleration of *My Uncle Toby*. That gentle-hearted creature hated no living thing. He even pitied Satan himself! But there is a secret standard of universal justice in most men's minds, even in some of the worst of them, an instinctive recognition of real worth, to which *My Uncle Toby* may fearlessly appeal. Every reader whose love is worth having, must love him the better for his toleration for all error, and his pity for all

wickedness. The stern bigots, the rigid ceremonialists, the prim respectables, the regular church-goers, the model men of society, with their spotless externals, may all walk superciliously enough and with elevated chins by the side of such unpretending beings as *My Uncle Toby* and *Corporal Trim*, but if weighed with them by an impartial hand in the scales of eternal justice, they would be found miserably wanting. These prudent wearers of fair outsides would shock the world if they exhibited their inner nature. They remain in the path of right by a continual restraint upon their disposition to go wrong. Their obvious caution betrays their consciousness of inward evil. Nothing but a never-sleeping regard to their self-interests saves them. Having no spontaneous virtues in themselves, they suspect the same want in others. All honest observers, are instinctively aware of the immeasurable superiority of Sterne's favourite characters over the formalists of the world, whom such a writer as the author of *Sir Charles Grandison* is pleased to glorify.

Sir Charles Grandison is a pattern formalist, a moral counter-caster, with whom virtue and feeling involve questions of profit and loss ; whose every moment is the result of an anxious and most deliberate calculation ; a keen reference to the advantages and evils of reputation and disgrace in this world, and of salvation and sulphur in the next.

Is such a selfish, cowardly, pragmatical pretender as this to be preferred to the hearty, honest, noble-hearted *Uncle Toby*, who dreams of no peril to his present or future state in trusting on all occasions his first unpremeditated impulses ? *My Uncle's* own fine nature is always instinctively right because he has never puzzled his brain with a subtle and selfish casuistry or a wary calculation of present interests and future punishments and rewards. One such portraiture of humanity as that of my *Uncle Toby* is better fitted to win the soul to goodness and to soften the heart with a truly Christian humanity than a thousand homilies from a thousand pulpits. The portraits of genuine worth, which such writers as Sterne and Goldsmith render familiar to the imagination, have a wonderful effect on the moral healthfulness of the mind.

It was because Sterne so loved truth and hated cant and mere conventionalism that he sometimes dashed aside the minor laws of society, and was more free in his expressions and allusions than was altogether becoming in a person of his station or profession. In the character of *Yorick*, he touches very affectingly on the enmity he was likely to excite by his light jests and his plain speaking.

Trust me, dear *Yorick*, this unwary pleasantry of thine will sooner or later

bring thee into scrapes and difficulties which no after-wit can extricate thee out of.

Revenge from some baneful corner shall level a tale of dishonour at thee, which no innocence of heart or integrity of conduct shall set right.—The fortunes of thy house shall totter ; thy character, which led the way to them, shall bleed on every side of it ;—thy faith questioned—thy works belied—thy wit forgotten,—thy learning trampled on. To wind up the last scene of thy tragedy, *Cruelty* and *Cowardice*, twin ruffians, hired and set on by *Malice* in the dark, shall strike together at all thy infirmities and mistakes ;—the best of us, my dear lad, lie open there,—and trust me,—trust me, Yorick, *when to gratify a private appetite, it is once resolved upon, that an innocent and a helpless creature shall be sacrificed, 'tis an easy matter to pick up sticks enough from any thicket where it has strayed to make a fire to offer it up with.*

We are by no means disposed to give credit to all the scandal of the hosts of malignant enemies which Sterne's free tongue and pen were sure to bring about him in his lifetime. The ghouls still haunt his grave. The man who created such a company of exquisite characters, so full of the milk of human kindness, could not have been without a portion of that holy fluid in his own nature. We are all double-natured ; compounded of good and evil. If Sterne had a demon in his bosom, he had an angel there too, and if he had many faults, we are heartily satisfied that he had at least as many virtues. As a great genius of warm sensibilities is often hurried into errors in art, which less gifted and cooler writers carefully avoid, so it may be with the noblest natures in private life. Their better qualities may be associated with irregularities and mistakes, which cold-hearted, cautious hypocrites or men who have neither virtues nor vices entirely escape.

Society is disposed to view the personal frailties of great writers with considerable indulgence. This is not because genius extenuates crime ; but because men of genius, let their errors or imperfections be what they may, have almost always some redeeming virtues. Genius is very seldom guilty of those offences which have a taint of meanness in them. Its errors are usually the errors of a too impulsive temperament. Men of genius are rarely avaricious. They are *never* cold, deliberate, formal, hypocritical villains. They have a certain quickness of feeling and a generosity of nature that would cover a multitude of sins. Sterne's genius was precisely of that kind which is most apt to run the possessor of it into a thousand unpleasant scrapes of which cool mediocrity has a wholesome dread ; and the malignant formalists, who instinctively hate all the great and eccentric virtues, invariably take a bitter advantage of the unfortunate excesses of higher but less cautious natures. ' We know how easy it is for the lovers of scandal to make the most of the slips of unguarded and impetuous spirits.

This world is often a hell to men of noble natures, who are

too proud and frank to conceal their imperfections. It is the paradise of hypocrites.

Some of the greatest scoundrels in existence wear the helmet of Pluto, and passing unharmed and unexposed in the throng of life, enjoy a thousand secret opportunities of inflicting mortal injuries on braver and better men.

But let the personal character of Sterne have been what it may, our concern is with the book, and not the man. The critic may pass his sentence on the one, but he should leave the great author of the universe to judge the other. The published works of Sterne are replete with lessons of Christian charity, and the truest and highest wisdom. They teach us to love our fellow-creatures and to believe that virtue is something more than a name. Even if "the man Sterne," had been blacker than his worst enemies have painted him, though we may be pretty sure that they extenuated nothing and set down *all* in malice, we should never have visited his sins upon his intellectual offspring. *Corporal Trim* and *My Uncle Toby* would have been as loveable as ever! We ought not to turn in disgust from a noble and immortal truth, even though it may fall from the lips of a liar. The truly pious will not enrol themselves in the rank of those who "will not serve God if the devil bids them." A sinner may see the right path, and yet take the wrong, while he honestly warns others from the same mistake or rather the same weakness. "Do as I *say* and not as I *do*," exclaims the frank and frail instructor. Precept is easier than example. When we advise others, we consult for their good, the innermost and purest recesses of our own minds. We then see things in "a dry light," unclouded by the vapours of passion. But when we act for ourselves, we are apt to give the rein to headlong impulses, "and the blood and baseness of our nature conducts us to the most preposterous conclusions." Our thoughts are often better than our feelings, but alas! too often also, less powerful. "If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes's palaces." But "it is easier to teach twenty what were good to be done than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching."

The author of a work fit to live is a benefactor to his race, and is it right in return to rake up his ashes for traces of human error that we may relieve ourselves of the weight of obligation by adducing the personal defects of the donor as an argument against the value of his gift? Mankind can derive no real advantage from this sort of sacrilege and ingratitude. The records of an author's personal foibles should be "writ

in water," while what remains of the finer and more spiritual part of his nature, enshrined in precious volumes, the world should not willingly let die.

Some authors who have improved and delighted the world with pure morality and elevated thoughts were addicted to many of the vices which they so eloquently condemned. But the opposition of words and actions is not always hypocrisy, nor is it peculiar to authors. There is assuredly some virtue even in the wicked when instead of trying to bring other men to a level with themselves, they contrive that their deliberate labours shall have a tendency to elevate and purify the hearts and minds of millions. "Of what importance is it to the public," says Helvetius, "whether the conduct of a particular person be good or bad? A man of genius, had he vices, is still more worthy of esteem than ordinary men. He serves his country either by the innocence of his manners and the virtuous example he sets, or by the knowledge he diffuses abroad. Of these two ways of serving his country, the last, without doubt, most directly belongs to genius, and is at the same time that which procures the greatest advantages to the public. The virtuous example given by a particular person is scarcely of use to any besides the small number of those with whom he converses: on the contrary, the new light the same person spreads over the arts and sciences, is a benefit to the whole world. It is then certain, that the man of genius, even though his probity should be very imperfect, would have a greater right to the gratitude of the public."

A gambler may very honestly dissuade others from the vice of gambling, though unable to restrain his own passion, and many men have a horror of debt who yet are unable to resist the daily temptation to spend more than they can afford. A man who has religious principles is not always religious in his conduct. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. He is not radically bad, however, who has noble and pious sentiments, even though his actions are not always in keeping with them. An author gives the public the best portion of his nature. He may be pure in the innermost recesses of his soul, though he sometimes gives way to temptation in his common daily life, and mingles, with self-condemnation, in the vulgar vices of those around him. A man is sometimes nobler and better than he seems. There are people, particularly amongst what are called the religious classes who uniformly *live up to their best*, while men of genius, the creatures of impulse and passion, alternately rush into opposite extremes of good and bad—and the world harshly judges of them rather by the depths they

sink into than the heights they soar. Dr. Johnson once very justly defended a person of great irregularity of conduct from a sweeping condemnation, by asserting, that though his actions were reprehensible, his principles were uncontaminated. And in ordinary life, we continually hear a foolish and erring man rescued from that utter damnation so eagerly awarded by the righteous-over-much, by the acknowledgment of his more generous associates that, notwithstanding all his faults, *his heart is in the right place*. It is quite as absurd and unfair to decide that a man who writes morally, but acts erroneously, is a hypocrite without a spark of virtue, as it would be to conclude, that an admirable author is a fool, because he is a dull companion in private life. Poor Goldsmith

Wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll.

We ought not to be surprized, if we sometimes find, in the relaxation of private life, the philosopher foolish, and the lover of virtue what he himself would be the first to despise in those happier moments of thought and enthusiasm, when genius is rapt in adoration of the pure, the beautiful, and the true.

After all that we have now said, it is perhaps needless to add that we retain our opinion of the immeasurable superiority of Sterne to Bulwer. The *Caxtons* is a clever and pleasing novel. It is one of the author's very best productions. But even in this work, as was the case with his "*Varieties of English Life*," Bulwer has drawn much of his inspiration from Sterne, whom he has evidently been studying of late with great attention. The elder *Caxton* and *Uncle Roland* are faint and feeble imitations of *Mr. Shandy* and *My Uncle Toby*.

A word or two respecting the charge of plagiarism. Like the poet Gray, Sterne borrowed thoughts and expressions and illustrations. But a mere pilferer without genius can do nothing with other men's materials. He cannot fuse his gatherings into one harmonious whole. The leaden links are sure to betray the golden spoils. This was not the case with either Gray or Sterne. They brought from their own store as rich things as those they stole. Milton borrowed largely; and he was none the worse for it. So did Ben Jonson. Such men foraged to some purpose; but weaker men would only have been encumbered with the same plunder. After all, no writer can steal *genius*. Sterne enjoyed *that* as a free gift from God. A Ferriar may question Sterne's right to the possession of particular words and sentences and images,—but it was not these that made his fame, and if they were all rendered back

to the original owners, Sterne would be very little the poorer.* *My Uncle Toby* and *Corporal Trim*, and *Mr. Shandy* would still breathe the breath of life.

Which was the most *original* writer, Sterne or Mackenzie? Who can hesitate to decide in favor of the former, and yet the latter was not what is called a plagiarist. But his whole mind was moulded in the minds of greater men. He had no original power. Sterne, though one of the boldest of plagiarists, was one of the most original authors in the language.

Let us pass now from Sterne to Goldsmith. Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, though one of the briefest of prose fictions, is worth a cart-load of modern novels in three volumes; and we say again that we would rather have been the intellectual father of *My Uncle Toby* and *The Corporal* than of all the characters that Bulwer's brain has yet been delivered of or is ever likely to engender, should he live a thousand years. The human cormorants of circulating libraries now read about three hundred and sixty-five novels in the year, and forget them as fast as they read them. All these phantasmagorical creations are as transient as morning vapours. They fade from the mind like breath from the burnished mirror.

They come like shadows, so depart.

But dear *Uncle Toby* and honest *Corporal Trim* and the good *Vicar of Wakefield* are acquaintances for life. They part from us only at that moment when we become insensible to all the realities of flesh and blood, and the great globe itself and all that it inherits is a forgotten dream.

* "Sterne, indeed," observes Sir Walter Scott, "might boldly plead in his own behalf, that the passages which he borrowed from others were of little value in comparison with those which are exclusively original; and that the former might have been written by many persons, while in his own proper line he stands alone and inimitable." Even Dr. Ferriar, who had traced the footsteps of Sterne into the obscurest corners, and had summed up the amount of stolen goods, acknowledged that the creator of *Uncle Toby* was quite rich enough to have done without them. That the result of Dr. Ferriar's laborious inquisition did not lead him to think irreverently of the true genius of Sterne, is pleasingly exemplified in the sonnet which he addressed to the shade of Yorick:—

Sterne, for whose sake I plod through miry ways,
Of antique wit and quibbling mazes drear,
Let not thy shade malignant censure fear,
Though aught of borrowed mirth my search betrays,
Long slept that Mirth in dust of ancient days;
(Erewhile to Guise or wanton Valois dear
Till waked by thee, in Skelton's joyous pile,
She flung on Tristram her capricious rays;
But the quick tear that checks our wondering smile
In sudden pause, or unexpected story,
Owns thy true mastery—and Lefevre's woes,
Maria's wanderings, and the prisoner's throes
Fix thee conspicuous on the throne of glory.

Perhaps, the English are the most moral and the most domestic people in the world, for no one, acquainted with the well-educated middle classes in rural life in England—especially amongst the humbler ranks of the Clergy—can regard Goldsmith's novel as too high a compliment to the national character. Its truth is obvious and home-felt. We cannot, however, deny, that it is *select* truth, and therefore not the *whole* truth. It is unquestionably the favourable side of the picture; but the representation, though one-sided, is not exaggerated. An Englishman has good reason, indeed, to be proud of his country, when it can furnish subjects for such a picture as this in which the general expression is recognized as national. Goethe was enraptured with this sweet little novel, and asserted that it had produced a permanent effect upon his own moral and intellectual character.* His fancy, however, when engaged in a work of fiction, teemed with very different images of human excellence from those which emanated from the purer mind of Goldsmith. Let the *Vicar of Wakefield* be compared with *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. The latter is supposed to be a picture of German manners. It is to be hoped that it is, at least, the unfavourable side; for if that work were to be regarded as a fair representation of the best phase of German society, we should be compelled to believe that it was rotten to the core. It is equally painful and surprising to find so great an intellect, as that of Goethe, picturing scenes of depravity with a sort of *gusto*, uttering not a syllable of abhorrence, or pity, or condemnation, at the conduct of men and women who sacrifice honour and virtue without a single pang or blush. He even dares to characterize them as noble beings.

There are readers who acknowledge the truth and pleasantness of Goldsmith's unrivalled little picture, and seem, in some degree, to appreciate the artist's felicity of touch, but yet regard the genius, exhibited in its production, as of a secondary order. The smallness of the work, and the absence of all pretension in the style, cause unthinking readers to look

* "Within these few days," says Goethe, "*the Vicar of Wakefield* fell accidentally into my hands; I could not help reading the charming book again from beginning to end, not a little affected by the lively recollection how much I had been indebted to the author seventy years ago. It is not to be described, the effect which Goldsmith and Sterne had upon me, just at the critical moment of mental development. That lofty and benevolent irony—that fair and indulgent view of all errors—that meekness under all calamities—that equanimity under all changes and chances—and the whole train of kindred virtues, whatever names they bear, formed my best education; and in the end, these are the thoughts and feelings which have reclaimed us from all the errors of life."

upon the author himself as a very good and simple-hearted creature who tells a plain tale and is peculiarly fortunate in his subject. The ease and naïveté of his manner, and the domestic and familiar character of the incidents, which seem to demand no power of invention, are very apt to lead a shallow critic into a depreciation of the author's genius. A melodramatic novel of these days, of the *Jack Shepherd* or *Newgate School*, or a flaring extravagance like the *Wondrous Tale of Alroy*, would imply to such a critic a far higher degree of intellectual power, than this simple picture of domestic life. The mistake is a common one. But it is in rescuing the familiar from contempt, and in delineating those slight and subtle traits of character in every-day-life which escape an uninspired observer, that the rarest order of genius and the finest and truest powers of imagination are developed. That which seems the easiest task is often the hardest. Novel writers and contributors to the periodicals find it much easier to imitate the horrors of Mrs. Ratcliffe and produce something striking, than to catch the serene truth, the unaffected ease, and the simple amenities of the author of *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Vulgar readers are gulled with all sorts of clap-traps, and the morbid sentimentality, the affected mysticism and obscurity, the eagerness to say extraordinary things in an extraordinary way, which are too often visible in the popular literature of the present day, make it a delicious relief and refreshment to a reader of true taste to turn back to the pages of such a writer as Goldsmith.

The *Vicar of Wakefield* is not without its defects as a mere story, but they interfere very slightly with the reader's pleasure. The little incongruities in the incidents do not affect the delineations of character. The vital parts of the work are all sound. Every critic has noticed the improbability of Squire Thornhill's being able to wander for years amongst his own tenants on his own estate, entirely unrecognized; and of his allowing his nephew to squander away his (the uncle's) own estate, in disgusting debaucheries, when a single word might have checked him. Goldsmith himself seems to have been conscious of these and other inconsistencies in the conduct of the story. "There are a hundred faults in this thing," he says, in his little preface. But he thought it needless to defend them, for "a book may be very amusing with numerous errors, or it may be very dull without a single absurdity." This is true, as far as it goes, and yet it is no justification of errors which the author might so easily have avoided. The novel was sold in his distress to satisfy his landlady, who insisted upon his either paying her bill or making her his wife, and when he had got out of this ludicrous, yet pain-

ful dilemma, he seems to have thought no more of a work which had been turned to account before it had received the last finish from his hand.* The bookseller kept the manuscript nearly two years in his desk, before he ventured to risk its publication, and yet Goldsmith never availed himself of the opportunity to revise it. But the work thus neglected by the author and mistrusted by the trader, not only brought fame to one and fortune to the other, but in spite of trivial defects, is at this day more widely circulated and read with more general delight and admiration than any other English prose fiction. It has been translated into every European language, and edition after edition in almost every form and style is still called for both in England and on the Continent. A popularity of this kind is a most unequivocal test of merit.

At this time of day, it would be a work of supererogation to dwell upon the bland and genial tone and the exquisite truth to nature of Goldsmith's pictures of rural domestic life, the delicate art with which he makes the simpler virtues dignified and attractive, even under the greatest trials and humiliations of common life, his quiet humour, his natural pathos, and his unfailing ease and grace of manner; but we cannot resist the temptation to refresh the memory of our readers with a few of those scraps of sly wisdom and good-humoured irony which peep out occasionally from under that veil of simplicity and apparent unconsciousness which the author wears with such singular felicity and so charming an effect.

In selecting these "beautiful little specimens of Goldsmith's genius," we imply no compliment to our own penetration, nor any want of respect for that of the reader. We quote the favourite passages and put parts of them in italics in the same spirit of cordial and irrepressible admiration with which a man points out the happiest touches in some favourite specimen of the Pictorial art to a stander-by. He does not pretend to instruct another, but solicits his attention, and thus endeavors by an appeal to his taste and intelligence to make him share his own enthusiasm and enjoyment.

The Domestic Economy of the Vicar's Wife.

"To do her justice, she was a good-natured, notable woman; and as for breeding, there were few country ladies who could shew more. She could read any English book without much spelling; but for pickling, preserving, and cookery,

* We forget where we have read of the terrible alternative insisted upon by the landlady. Perhaps this part of the story is apocryphal. It is not in Boswell, or Scott, or Forster: there is no doubt, however, of the fact that poor Goldsmith sold his Novel (through Dr. Johnson's kind agency) to pay off the debt for his lodgings.

none could excel her. She prided herself also upon being an excellent contriver in housekeeping; though *I could never find that we grew richer with all her contrivances.*"

The Vicar's pride in the beauty of his Daughters.

"It would be fruitless to deny my exultation when I saw my little ones about me; but the vanity and the satisfaction of my wife were even greater than mine. When our visitors would say, 'Well, upon my word, Mr Primrose, you have the finest children in the whole country:' 'Ay, neighbour,' she would answer, 'they are as Heaven made them—handsome enough, if they be good enough: for, handsome is that handsome does.' And then she would bid the girls hold up their heads; who, to conceal nothing, were certainly very handsome. *More outside is so very trifling a circumstance with me that I should scarce have remembered to mention it had it not been a general topic of conversation in the country.*"

A Character not unlike the Author's own.

"The slightest distress, whether real or fictitious, touched him to the quick and his soul laboured under a sickly sensibility of the miseries of others. Thus disposed to relieve, it will be easily conjectured, he found numbers disposed to solicit. his profusions began to impair his fortune, but not his good nature; that, indeed, was seen to increase as the other seemed to decay; he grew improvident as he grew poor; and, though he talked like a man of sense, his actions were those of a fool."

Mrs. Primrose's family Pride in the midst of her Distress. The Reader is aware that Mr. Burchell is the rich Squire Thornhill in disguise.

"Thus, after we were refreshed at the next inn, and had dined together, as Mr. Burchell was going to a different part of the country, he took leave: and we pursued our journey, my wife observing as we went, that she liked him extremely; and protesting that, *if he had birth and fortune to entitle him to match into such a family as ours*, she knew no man she would sooner fix upon. *I could not but smile to hear her talk in this lofty strain; but I was never much displeased with those harmless delusions that tend to make us more happy.*"

The First Visit of the Young Squire.

"The whole family seemed earnest to please him: my girls attempted to entertain him with topics they thought most modern: while Moses, on the contrary, gave him a question or two from the ancients, *for which he had the satisfaction of being laughed at.* My little ones were no less busy, and fondly stuck close to the stranger: all my endeavours could scarce keep their dirty fingers from handling and tarnishing the lace on his clothes and lifting up the flaps of his pocket-holes to see what was there."

The Speculations of the Vicar's Family regarding the Young Squire.

"As soon as he was gone, my wife called a council on the conduct of the day. She was of opinion that it was a most fortunate hit; for she had known even stranger things than that brought to bear. She hoped again to see the day in which we might hold up our heads with the best of them; and concluded, she protested she could see no reason why the two Miss Wrinklers should marry great fortunes, and her children get none. As this last argument was directed to me, I protested I could see no reason for it neither, *nor why Mrs. Simpkins got the ten thousand pounds prize in the lottery, and we sat down with a blank.* 'I protest Charles,' cried my wife, 'this is the way you always damp my girls and me, when we are in spirits. Tell me, Soph, my dear, what do you think of our new visitor? Don't you think he seemed to be good-natured?'—'Immensely so, indeed mamma,' replied she, 'I think he has a great deal to say upon every thing, and is never at a loss; and the more trifling the subject, the more he has to say.'—'Yes,' cried Olivia, 'he is well enough for a man; but, for my part I don't much like him, he is so extremely impudent and familiar; but on the guitar he is shocking.' *These two last speeches I interpreted by contraries. I found by this*

that Sophy internally despised, as much as Olivia secretly admired him. 'Whatever may be your opinions of him, my children,' cried I, 'to confess a truth, he has not prepossessed me in his favour. Disproportioned friendships ever terminate in disgust : and I thought, notwithstanding all his ease, that he seemed perfectly sensible of the distance between us.

Sophy's defence of Mr. Burchell, then erroneously supposed to be in a destitute condition.

"—'You are right Sophy,' cried my son Moses ; 'and one of the ancients finely represents so malicious a conduct by the attempts of a rustic to flay Marsyas, whose skin, the fable tells us, had been wholly stripped off by another ; besides, I don't know if this poor man's situation be so bad as my father would represent it. We are not to judge of the feelings of others by what we might feel, if in their place. However dark the habitation of the mole to our eyes, yet the animal itself finds the apartment sufficiently lightsome. And, to confess a truth, this man's mind seems fitted to his station ; *for I never heard any one more sprightly than he was to-day, when he conversed with you.*' This was said without the least design ; however, it excited a blush which she strove to cover by an affected laugh ; assuring him that she scarcely took any notice of what he said to her : *but that she believed he might once have been a very fine gentleman.* The readiness with which she undertook to vindicate herself, and her blushing, were symptoms I did not internally approve ; but I repressed my suspicions."

The Vicar's sly Destruction of the Wash.

"As we expected our landlord the next day, my wife went to make the venison-pasty ; Moses sat reading while I taught the little ones ; my daughters seemed equally busy with the rest ; and I observed them for a good while cooking something on the fire. I at first supposed they were assisting their mother, but little Dick informed me, in a whisper, that they were making a wash for the face. Washes of all kinds I had a natural antipathy to ; for I knew that, instead of mending the complexion, they spoiled it. I therefore approached my chair by sly degrees to the fire, and grasping the poker, as if it wanted mending, seemingly by accident, overturned the whole composition, and it was too late to begin another."

The Conversation of the Young Squire.

"As Mr. Burchell had hinted to us, the day before, that he was making some proposals of marriage to Miss Wilmot, my son George's former mistress, this a good deal damped the heartiness of his reception : but accident, in some measure, relieved our embarrassment ; for one of the company happening to mention her name, Mr. Thornhill observed, with an oath that he never knew any thing more absurd than calling such a fright a beauty. 'For, strike me ugly,' continued he, 'if I should not find as much pleasure in choosing my mistress by the information of a lamp under the clock of St. Dunstan's.' At this he laughed, and so did we ; *the jests of the rich are ever successful.* Olivia too could not avoid whispering loud enough to be heard, *that he had an infinite fund of humour.*

Sophy's Skill in Controversy.

"My wife now kept up the conversation, though not the argument : she observed, that several very prudent men of our acquaintance were free-thinkers, and made very good husbands ; and she knew some sensible girls that had skill enough to make converts of their spouses : 'And who knows, my dear,' continued she, 'what Olivia may be able to do ? The girl has a great deal to say upon every subject, and to my knowledge is very skilled at controversy.' 'Why, my dear, what controversy can she have read ?' cried I. It does not occur to me that I ever put such books into her hands ; you certainly over-rate her merit.'—'Indeed, papa,' replied Olivia, she does not ; I have read a great deal of controversy. I have read the disputes between Thwackum and Square ; the controversy between Robinson Crusoe and Friday, the savage ; and I am

now employed in reading the controversy in Religious Courtship :—' Very well,' cried I, 'that's a good girl ; I find you are perfectly qualified for making converts ; and so go help your mother to make the gooseberry pie.' "

Moses sells a Colt for a Case of Green Spectacles.

" ' Well done, my good boy,' returned she ; ' I knew you would touch them off. Between ourselves, three pound five shillings and two-pence is no bad day's work. Come let us have it then.'—' I have brought back *no money*,' cried Moses, again. ' *I have laid it all out in a bargain*, and here it is,' pulling out a bundle from his breast ; ' here they are ; a gross of green spectacles, with silver rims and shagreen cases.'—' A gross of green spectacles !' repeated my wife, in a faint voice. ' And you have parted with the colt, and brought us back nothing but a gross of paltry green spectacles ?' Dear mother,' cried the boy, ' *why won't you listen to reason !* I had them a dead bargain or I should not have bought them. The silver rims alone will sell for double the money.'—' A fig for the silver rims !' cried my wife, in a passion : ' I dare swear they won't sell for above half the money at the rate of broken silver, five shillings an ounce.'—' *You need be under no uneasiness*,' cried I, ' *about selling the rims, for they are not worth sixpence, for I perceive they are only copper varnished over.*' "

The Vicar himself sells a Horse, and is " sold" himself, receiving in payment a Cheque not worth a Farthing.

" Though I was already sufficiently mortified, my greatest struggle was to come, in facing my wife and daughters. No truant was ever more afraid of returning to school, there to behold the master's visage, than I was of going home. *I was determined, however, to anticipate their fury, by first falling into a passion myself.*

Country Scandal suggested by the great Picture of the Primrose Family.

" The squire's portrait being found united with ours was an honour too great to escape envy. Scandalous whispers began to be circulated at our expense, and our tranquillity was continually disturbed by persons who came as friends to tell us what was said of us by enemies."

Flattery.

" As flattery was his trade, he practised it with the easiest address imaginable ; but it came awkward and stiff from me ; and as every day my patron's desire of flattery increased, so every hour, being better acquainted with his defects, I became more unwilling to give it."

The Vicar's Eldest Son goes to Holland to teach English.

" The wind was fair, our voyage short, and, after having paid my passage with half my movables, I found myself fallen as from the skies, a stranger in one of the principal streets of Amsterdam. In this situation I was unwilling to let any time pass unemployed in teaching. I addressed myself, therefore, to two or three of those I met, whose appearance seemed most promising ; but it was impossible to make ourselves mutually understood. It was not till this very moment I recollected, that in order to teach Dutchmen English, it was necessary that they should first teach me Dutch. How I came to overlook so obvious an objection, is to me amazing ; but certain it is, I overlooked it.

An indirect Compliment to Literature.

" This scheme thus blown up, I had some thoughts of fairly shipping back to England again ; but dropping into company with an Irish student, who was returning from Louvain, our conversation turning upon topics of literature, (for, by the way, it may be observed, that I always forget the meanness of my circumstances when I could converse upon such subjects) from him I learnt that there were not two men in his whole university who understood Greek."

A Connoscento.

" Upon asking how he had been taught the art of a connoscento so very

suddenly, he assured me that nothing was more easy. The whole secret consisted in a strict adherence to two rules; the one, always to observe that *the picture might have been better if the painter had taken more pains*; and the other to praise the works of Pietro Perugino."

But we must really stop here, or we shall be tempted to reprint half a novel that is already in every body's hands. We hope none of our readers will object to have the above passages recalled to them, however often they may have read them before. They are gems of the purest water, and will bear repeated examination. Almost every page of the *Vicar of Wakefield* is enriched with similar treasures, and yet there is no appearance of display. Indeed these beauties are so little prominent, so often half hidden under an air of naive simplicity and familiar ease, that they may very easily escape the observation of a rapid and careless reader. Their unobtrusiveness is one of their greatest charms.

We find this distinction between some of the most ambitious of the prose fictions of this day and the simple little picture of the Primrose family—the oftener we peruse the first, the less they please us; while the oftener we contemplate the latter, the more it rises in our estimation.

• •

SONNET.—To —————.

O DISTANT shape unseen ! O voice unheard !
 O mind unknown ! and like a dream to me—
 A sweet vague dream of heaven—while I to thee
 Am less than air, a vision, or a word !
 The magic syllables of thy name have stirred
 My soul—and Fancy suddenly
 Wide opes her gleaming doors. I seem to see
 A radiant eye that hath not yet incurred
 The penalty of care. I hear a tone
 Of musical mirth.—Ah ! that fair face is thine—
 If she who gave thee life, not birth alone
 Bestowed, but lineaments so like her own.
 A few moons more, and this sweet dream of mine
 May change into reality divine !

OCEAN SKETCHES.

Written on the Voyage to India.

I.

[A BREEZE AT MID-DAY.]

THE distant haze, like clouds of silvery dust,
 Now sparkles in the sun. The freshening breeze
 Whitens the round sea-plain ; and like a steed
 With proud impatience fired, the glorious ship
 Quick bounds exultant, and with rampant prow
 Off flings the glittering foam. Around her wake,
 A radiant milky way, the sea-birds weave
 Their circling flight, or slowly sweeping wide
 O'er boundless ocean, graze with drooping wing
 The brightly-crested waves. Each sudden surge,
 Up-dashed, appears a momentary tree
 Fringed with the hoar frost of a wintry morn ;
 And then, like blossoms from a breeze-stirred bough,
 The light spray strews the deep.

How fitfully the struggling day-beams pierce
 The veil of heaven,—On yon far line of light,
 That like a range of breakers streaks the main,
 The ocean swan—the snow-white Albatross—
 Gleams like a dazzling foam-flake in the sun !—
 Gaze upward—and behold, where parted clouds
 Disclose ethereal depths, its dark-hued mate
 Hangs motionless, on arch-resembling wings,
 As though' twere painted on the sky's blue vault.

Sprinkling the air, the speck-like petrels form
 A living shower ! Awhile their pinions gray
 Mingle scarce-seen among the misty clouds,
 Till suddenly their white breasts catch the light,
 And flash like silver stars !

II.

[A STORM—AT NIGHT.]

Yon cloud-arch spreads,—the black waves curl and foam
 Beneath the coming tempest ;—Lo ! 'tis here !
 The fierce, insatiate winds, like demons, howl
 Around the labouring bark. Her snow-white sails,
 Outspread like wings of some gigantic bird
 Struck with dismay, are fluttering in the gale,

And sound like thunder. Now the troubled heart
 Of ocean quails to its profoundest depths,—
 The dark heavens groan,—the wildly scattered clouds,
 Like routed hosts innumerable, hurry past
 Stars dimly seen and seldom. Up vast hills,
 Or down wide-yawning vales, the lone ship drives
 As if to swift destruction. Still she braves,
 Though rudely buffeted by tempest-fiends,
 The elemental war. Ah ! that dread wave,
 As though some huge sea-monster dealt the blow,
 Hath made her start and tremble !—Yet again,
 For one hushed moment, with recovered power,
 She proudly glides in majesty serene,
 Calm as a silver cloud on summer skies,
 Or yon pale moon amid the strife of heaven !

Now slowly the huge mountains are upheaved,
 Their sides unruffled by the fretful waves
 Of less terrific seas. Their peaks alone
 Are shattered by the wind that hurls the foam
 Adown the dreary vales. In wintry lands
 The viewless pinions of the northern breeze,
 Thus sweep the loosened snow-wreaths from the heads
 Of Alpine hills !

• • •

A brief but awful pause !—
 Again the quick-reviving tempest roars
 With fiercer rage !—These changes image well
 The sullen calm of comfortless despair,
 The fearful tumult of the guilty heart !

III.

[A CALM—AT MID-DAY.]

Now in the fervid noon the smooth bright sea
 Heaves slowly, for the wandering winds are dead
 That stirred it into foam. The lonely ship
 Rolls wearily, and idly flap the sails
 Against the creaking mast. The lightest sound
 Is lost not on the ear, and things minute
 Attract the observant eye.

The scaly tribe,
 Bright-winged, that upward flash from torrid seas,
 Like startled birds, now burst their glassy caves,
 And glitter in the sun ; while diamond drops
 From off their briny pinions fall like rain,
 And leave a dimpled track.

The horizon clouds
Are motionless, and yield fantastic shapes
Of antique towers, vast woods and frozen lakes,
Huge rampant beasts, and giant phantoms seen
In wildering visions only.

High o'er head,
Dazzling the sight, hangs, quivering like a lark,
The silver Tropic-bird ;—at length it flits
Far in cerulean depths and disappears,
Save for a moment, when with fitful gleam
It waves its wings in light. The pale thin moon,
Her crescent floating on the azure air,
Shows like a white bark sleeping on the main
When not a ripple stirs. Yon bright clouds form,
(Ridged as the ocean sands, with spots of blue,
Like water left by the receding tide,)
A calm celestial shore !—How beautiful !
The spirit of eternal peace hath thrown
A spell upon the scene ! The wide blue floor
Of the Atlantic world—a sky-girt plain—
Now looks as never more the Tempest's tread
Would break its shining surface ; and the ship
Seems destined ne'er again to brave the gale,
Anchored for ever on the silent deep !

IV.

[SUN-RISE.]

The stars have melted in the morning air,—
The white moon waneth dim.—The glorious sun,
Slow-rising from the cold cerulean main,
Now shoots through broken clouds his upward beams,
That kindle into day. At length his orb,
Reddening the ocean verge, with sudden blaze
Awakes a smiling world ;—the dull gray mist
Is scattered, and the sea-view opens wide !

—The glassy waves
Are touched with joy, and dance in sparkling throngs
Around the gallant bark. The roscate clouds
Rest on the warm horizon,—like far hills
Their radiant outlines gleam in yellow light,
And o'er their shadowy range a thin scud floats,
Like wreaths of smoke breeze-borne from beacon-fires.

The deep blue vault is streaked with golden bars,
Like veins in wealthy mines ; and where the rays

Of day's refulgent orb are lost in air,
 In small round masses shine the fleecy clouds,
 As bright as snow-clad bowers when sudden gleams
 Flash on the frozen earth.

Ascending high
 The gorgeous steps of heaven, the dazzling sun
 Contracts his disk, and rapidly assumes
 A silver radiance—glittering like a globe
 Of diamond spars !

V.

[SUN-SET.]

Now near the flushed horizon brightly glows
 The red dilated sun. Around his path
 Aerial phantoms float in liquid light,
 And steeped in beauty, momentarily present
 Fresh forms, and strange varieties of hue,
 As fair and fleeting as our early dreams !—

Behold him rest on yon cloud-mountain's peak !—
 Touched with celestial fire, volcano-like,
 The dazzling summit burns ;—eruptive flames
 Of molten gold with ruddy lustre tinge
 The western heavens, and shine with mellowed light
 Through the transparent crests of countless waves !

The scene is changed—behind the ethereal mount,
 Now fringed with light—the day-god downward speeds
 His unseen way ;—yet where his kindling steps
 Lit the blue vault, the radiant trace remains,
 E'en as the sacred memory of the past
 Illumes life's evening hour ! Again ! Again !
 He proudly comes ! and lo ! resplendent sight !
 Bursts through the cloud-formed hill, whose shattered sides
 Are edged with mimic lightning !—his red beams
 Concentrating at last in one full blaze,
 Bright as a flaming bark, his fiery form
 Sinks in the cold blue main !

The golden clouds
 Fade into gray—the broad cerulean tide
 A darker tint assumes. In restless throngs
 Phosphoric glow-worms deck with living gems
 The twilight wave, as Orient fire-flies gleam
 In dusky groves,—or like reflected stars,
 When evening zephyrs kiss the dimpled face.
 Of that far lake whose crystal mirror bears

An image of my home ! Ah those white walls
 Now flash their silent beauty on my soul,
 And, like a sun-burst on my clouded way,
 Awake a tender joy !

VI.

[NIGHT.]

The day-beams slowly fade, and shadowy night,
 Soft as a gradual dream, serenely steals
 Over the watery waste. Like low-breathed strains
 Of distant music on the doubtful ear,
 When solitude and silence reign around,
 The small waves gently murmur,

Calm and pale—

A phantom of the sky—the full-orbed moon
 Hath glided into sight. The glimmering stars
 Now pierce the soft obscurity of heaven
 In golden swarms, innumerable and bright
 As insect-myriads in the sunset air.
 The breeze is hushed, and yet the tremulous sea,
 As if by hosts of unseen spirits trod,
 Is broken into ripples, crisp and clear
 As shining fragments of a frozen stream
 Beneath the winter sun. The lunar wake
 Presents to rapt imagination's view
 A pathway to the skies !

In such a scene

Of glory and repose, the rudest breast
 Is pure and passionless,—the holy calm
 Is breathed at once from heaven, and sounds and thoughts
 Of human strife would seem a mockery
 Of Nature's mystic silence. Sacred dreams
 Unutterable, deep, and undefined,
 Now crowd upon the soul, and make us feel
 An intellectual contact with the worlds
 Beyond our mortal vision.

VII.

[LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.]

Profusely scattered o'er the fields of air,
 Float the thin clouds, whose fleecy outlines dim,
 Fade, like departing dreams from mortal sight—
 So gradually with heaven's deep blue they blend
 Their paler tints,—

Now on the vessel's deck,
 Luxuriously reclined in idle ease,
 I mark the varied main. From either side
 I gaze alternate, and strange contrasts find
 Of light and shade. The scene divided seems.
 Sun-ward, the moon-tide rays almost o'erpower
 The ocean's azure hue, like glittering stars
 Too richly on some regal garment wrought.
 I turn from fierce intolerable light,
 And lo ! the darker side a prospect shows,
 On which the dazzled eye delights to rest ;
 For not a sun-beam glances on the sea.
 The long blue waves seem, cord-like, twisted round,
 And slide away, as if by viewless hands
 Drawn slowly past. At intervals, far off,
 A small and solitary breaker throws
 A snow-wreath on the surface ; and I hear
 A low crisp sound, as through the glassy plain
 The gallant vessel cuts her glorious way !

VIII.

[SUN-SET CHANGES.]

Behold that bridge of clouds !
 Upraised beyond, an air-wrought precipice
 Appears stream-mantled,—kindled vapours form
 The radiant torrent, touched with every tint
 That mingles on the vest of parting day.
 Beneath that shadowy bridge the broad red sun,
 Its outline undefined, continues still
 The same celestial flood, that downward dashed
 Breaks into fiery foam !

That scene is o'er.

The hill, the bridge, the stream have passed away !
 The sun hath changed its hue, and now presents
 A silvery globe, floating on fervid skies
 That gleam like seas of gold. Its glorious disk
 As if with insect-clouds thin speckled seems,
 Yet glitters on the burning front of heaven,
 Bright as a crystal spar, or quivering wave
 Beneath the glare of moon !

IX.

[SEA-FOAM.]

The breeze is gentle, yet the gliding ship
 Wins not her tranquil way without a trace,

But softly stirs the surface of the sea.
 'Tis pleasant now, with vacant mind to watch
 The light foam at her side. Awhile it seems
 Most like a tattered robe of stainless white,
 Whose rents disclose a verdant vest beneath.
 Then, suddenly, wild Fancy wanders home
 For wintry images of snow-patched plains
 That prove a partial thaw. 'E'en school-days dear
 Return if haply on the idle brain
 Remembrance of the pictured map presents
 The world's irregular bounds of land and wave!
 Nor less beguilement for the lingering hours
 Of life at sea, the backward track may yield.
 How beautiful the far seen wake appears !
 Resplendent as the comet's fiery tail
 In Heaven's blue realms ! Beneath the proud ship's stern
 A thousand mimic whirlpools chafe and boil,
 While fitfully up-sent from lucid depths
 Thick throngs of silver bubbles sparkle bright,
 Like diamonds by night in lustrous halls.

SONNET.

EVENING, ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGES.

I WANDERED thoughtfully by Gunga's shore,
 While the broad sun upon the slumbering wave
 Its last faint flush of golden radiance gave,
 And tinged with tenderest hues some ruins hoar.
 Methinks this earth had never known before
 A calm so deep—'twas silent as the grave.
 The smallest bird its light wing could not lave
 In the smooth flood, nor from the green-wood soar,
 (If but the tiniest branch its pinions stirred
 Or shook the dew-drops from the leaves,) unheard.
 Like pictured shadows 'gainst the western beam
 The dark boats slept, while each lone helmsman stood
 Still as a statue!—the strange quietude
 Enthralled my soul like some mysterious dream !

MEN OF THE WORLD.

Swift had a friend on whose success in life he could not always look with complacency—"Stafford (a merchant)," said he, "is worth a plum, and is now lending the Government £40,000, yet we were educated together at the same school and university."

Budgell in the *Spectator* (No. 353) thus describes these school-fellows:—"One of them was not only thought an impenetrable blockhead at school, but still maintained his reputation at the university; the other was the pride of his master, and the most celebrated person in the college of which he was a member. The man of genius is at present buried in a country parsonage of eightscore pounds a-year; while the other with the bare abilities of a common scrivener has got an estate of above an hundred thousand pounds."

Chalmers's Preface to the Rambler.

THERE is a great difference between the power of giving good advice and the ability to act upon it. Theoretical wisdom is, perhaps, rarely associated with practical wisdom; and we often find that men of no talent whatever, contrive to pass through life with credit and success, under the guidance of a kind of instinct. These are the persons who seem to stumble by mere good luck upon the philosopher's stone. In the commerce of life, every thing they touch seems to turn into gold.

We are apt to place the greatest confidence in the advice of the successful, and none at all in that of the unprosperous, as if fortune never favoured fools nor neglected the wise. A man may have more intellect than does him good, for it tempts him to meditate and to compare when he should act with rapidity and decision; and by trusting too much to his own sagacity and too little to fortune, he often loses many a golden opportunity, that is like a prize in the lottery to his less brilliant competitors. It is not the men of thought, but the men of action, who are best fitted to push their way upwards in the world. The Hamlets or philosophical speculators are out of their element in the crowd. They are wise enough as reflecting observers, but the moment they descend from their solitary elevation and mingle with the thick throng of their fellow-creatures, there is a sad discrepancy between their dignity as teachers and their conduct as actors. Their wisdom in busy life evaporates in words. They talk like sages, but they act like fools. There is an essential difference between those qualities that are necessary for success in the world, and those that are required in the closet. Bacon was the wisest of human beings, in his quiet study, but when he entered the wide and noisy theatre of life, he sometimes conducted himself in a way of which he could have admirably pointed out the impropriety in a moral essay. He knew as

well as any man that honesty is the best policy, but he did not always act as if he thought so. The fine intellect of Addison could trace with subtlety and truth all the proprieties of social and of public life, but he was himself deplorably inefficient both as a companion and a statesman. A more delicate and accurate observer of human life than the Poet Cowper, is not often met with, though he was absolutely incapable of turning his knowledge and good sense to a practical account, and when he came to act for himself, was as helpless and dependent as a child. The excellent author of the *Wealth of Nations*, could not manage the economy of his own house.

People who have sought the advice of successful men of the world, have often experienced a feeling of surprise and disappointment when listening to their common-place maxims and weak and barren observations. There is very frequently the same discrepancy, though in the opposite extreme, between the words and the actions of prosperous men of the world that I have noticed in the case of unsuccessful men of wisdom. The former talk like fools, but they act like men of sense. The reverse is the case with the latter. The thinkers may safely direct the movements of other men, but they do not seem peculiarly fitted to direct their own.

They who bask in the sunshine of prosperity, are generally inclined to be so ungrateful to fortune, as to attribute all their success to their own exertions, and to season their pity for their less successful friends with some degree of contempt. In the great majority of cases nothing can be more ridiculous and unjust. In the list of the prosperous, there are very few indeed, who owe their advancement to talent and sagacity alone. The majority must attribute their rise to a combination of industry, prudence and good fortune—particularly the last. Most successful men are more indebted to the lucky accidents of life than to their own character or conduct.

Perhaps, not only the higher intellectual gifts, but even the finer moral emotions are an incumbrance to the fortune-hunter. A gentle disposition and extreme frankness and generosity, have been the ruin, in a worldly sense, of many a noble spirit. There is a degree of cautiousness and mistrust, and a certain insensibility and sternness, that seem essential to the man who has to bustle through the world, and to secure his own interests. He cannot turn aside, and indulge in generous sympathies, without neglecting, in some measure, his own affairs. It is like a pedestrian's progress through a crowded street. He cannot pause for a moment, or look to the right or left, without increasing his own obstructions. When time and business press hard upon him,

the cry of affliction on the road-side is unheeded and forgotten. He acquires a habit of indifference to all but the one thing needful—his own success.

I shall not here speak of those by-ways to success in life which require only a large share of hypocrisy and meanness ; nor of those insinuating manners and frivolous accomplishments which are so often better rewarded than worth or genius ; nor of the arts by which a brazen-faced adventurer sometimes throws a modest and meritorious rival into the shade. Nor shall I proceed to show how great a drawback is a noble sincerity in the commerce of the world. The memorable scene between Gil Blas and the Archbishop of Toledo, is daily and nightly re-acted on the great stage of life. I cannot enter upon minute particulars, or touch upon all the numerous branches of my subject, without exceeding the limits I have proposed to myself in the present essay.

Perhaps a knowledge of the world, in the ordinary acceptation of the phrase, may mean nothing more than a knowledge of conventionalisms, or a familiarity with the forms and ceremonials of society. This, of course, is of easy acquisition when the mind is once bent upon the task. The practice of the small proprieties of life to a congenial spirit, soon ceases to be a study ; it rapidly becomes a mere habit, or an untroubled and unerring instinct. This is always the case when there is no sedentary labour by the midnight lamp to produce an ungainly stoop in the shoulders, and a conscious defect of grace and pliancy in the limbs ; and when there is no abstract thought or poetic vision to dissipate the attention, and blind us to the trivial realities that are passing immediately around us. Some degree of vanity and a perfect self-possession are absolutely essential ; but high intellect is only an obstruction. Men whose heads are little better than a pin's, have rendered themselves extremely acceptable in well-dressed circles. There are some who seem born for the boudoir and the ball-room, while others are as little fitted for fashionable society, as a fish is for the open air and the dry land. They who are more familiar with books than with men, cannot look calm and pleased when their souls are inwardly perplexed. The almost venial hypocrisy of politeness, is the more criminal and disgusting in their judgment, on account of its difficulty to themselves and the provoking ease with which it appears to be adopted by others. The loquacity of the forward, the effeminate affectation of the foppish, and the sententiousness of shallow gravity, excite a feeling of contempt and weariness that they have neither the skill nor the inclination to conceal.

A recluse philosopher is unable to return a simple saluta-

tion without betraying his awkwardness and uneasiness to the quick eye of a man of the world. He exhibits a ludicrous mixture of humility and pride. He is indignant at the assurance of others, and is mortified at his own timidity. He is vexed that he should suffer those whom he feels to be his inferiors to enjoy a temporary superiority. He is troubled that they should be able to trouble him, and ashamed that they should make him ashamed. Such a man, when he enters into society, brings all his pride, but leaves his vanity behind him. Pride allows our wounds to remain exposed, and makes them doubly irritable; but vanity, as Sancho says of sleep, seems to cover a man all over as with a cloak. A contemplative spirit cannot concentrate its attention on minute and uninteresting ceremonials, and a sense of unfitness for society makes the most ordinary of its duties a painful task. There are some authors who would rather write a quarto volume in praise of woman, than hand a fashionable lady to her chair.

The frivolous but easy and lively conversation of polite life is naturally unsuited to the retired scholar; but it would perhaps be less objectionable if he thought he could take a share in it with any degree of credit. He has not the feeling of calm and unmixed contempt; there is envy and irritation in his heart. He cannot despise his fellow-creatures, nor be wholly indifferent to their good opinion. Whatever he may think of their manners and conversation, his uneasiness evinces that he does not feel altogether above or independent of them. No man likes to seem unfit for the company he is in. At Rome every man would be a Roman.

Of the class of proud and sensitive men of thought, the poet Cowper was a striking example, and he has described their feelings with great truth and vivacity:—

I pity bashful men, who feel the pain
Of fancied scorn and undeserved disdain,
And bear the marks upon a blushing face
Of needless shame and self-imposed disgrace.
Our sensibilities are so acute
The fear of being silent makes us mute.
* * * * *
The visit paid, with ecstasy we come
As from a seven years' transportation home,
And there resume an unembarrassed brow,
Recovering what we lost we know not how,
The faculties that seemed reduced to nought,
Expression and the privilege of thought.

There is in this City of Palaces* more than one example of the unfitness of the literary character for general society.

* Calcutta—where this article was written.

A particular friend of my own, who is fonder of the study than the drawing-room, when he enters a social circle in which there are faces not thoroughly familiar to him, is like a wanderer in a foreign scene. His strange blunders are often exceedingly offensive to the feelings and prejudices of those whom he is most desirous to oblige. He fails in exact proportion to his anxiety for success. If he were walking in his own garden or sitting in his own domestic circle, he could be as self-possessed and common-place a person as any in the world. He might then remain for hours in a state of mental ease, or inaction, and even "whistle for want of thought;" but the moment that he enters a new scene, and feels a little out of his element, his intellectual faculties commence a rapid chaotic dance. It is in vain that he attempts to control or guide a single thought; the reason has no longer sovereign sway and masterdom. His brain resembles the state of a ship in the last extremity, when the sailors, laughing at all authority, leave every thing to fate, and indulge themselves in a mad and melancholy merriment. In this state of temporary delirium, a man can hardly be thought responsible for his own actions. My friend, with all his defects, is so genuinely candid and kind-hearted, that he will excuse the liberty I am taking with his character, in using it as an illustration, and I know well that he will readily acknowledge the truth of the portrait. He will not be displeased should others also recognize it, for it forms an indirect apology that may set him right with many who have imagined that he had intentionally offended them. I will even mention an instance of his strange confusion and forgetfulness. When he was preparing to leave England for this country, he called at the India House for a "shipping order" for himself and family. He found himself suddenly in a crowd of gay young clerks, in whose presence he was somewhat abruptly questioned as to the number and names of his children. He had only three of those inestimable treasures; but there was such an instantaneous anarchy in his brain, that he was obliged to confess he could not answer the question. Every one stared at him with astonishment, and set him down for a madman. He sneaked painfully out of the room, and had scarcely closed the door, when his memory was as clear and precise as ever. I shall venture upon another anecdote, equally characteristic. He received some time ago a pair of marriage tickets. He was eager to acknowledge the compliment, and pay his grateful respects to the young bride; but bad health, official duties, obliviousness, and a spirit of procrastination, all combined to occasion the postponement of his visit. He called at last, and ex-

perienced his usual stultification. In the presence of a number of visitors, all of whose eyes were intently fixed upon him, he observed that he was glad to see so many persons present, as it convinced him that the honeymoon was over, and that he had not called earlier than delicacy and custom permitted. He had forgotten that a whole year had slipped away since he had received his tickets ! There was a general laugh, and the lady good-humouredly sent for a fine strapping baby, as a still stronger proof that his visit was not too early a one. I cannot resist the temptation to add one more example of his occasional perplexities. He was acquainted with two brothers, of whom the one was a literary man and the other a merchant. The latter died, and a few months after that event, my friend met the survivor. He at once confounded the dead man with the living, and in the course of conversation embraced an opportunity to express his regret to the supposed merchant at the deplorably bad success of his poor brother's published poems, adding in the freedom and plenitude of his confidence, a candid opinion (which could not now, he observed, reach the ears of the person referred to, or give him a moment's pain), that in devoting himself to literature, he had sadly mistaken the nature of his own powers. My unhappy friend had hardly let fall the last word of his unconscious jest, when a light flashed across his brain, and he saw his error. The scene that ensued, baffles all description. It would be difficult to say which of the two was the most severely vexed—the vain and irritable poetaster or the dreaming blunderer. I could easily multiply instances of my friend's excessive abstraction and laughable forgetfulness ; but these are enough for my purpose. I will only add that he hardly ever addresses any person by his right name, and if suddenly called upon to introduce a friend to a strange circle, would be sure to make some extraordinary blunder, the absurdity of which would stare him in the face the moment after. He is sometimes so vexed by his almost incredible mistakes, that he vows in his despair he will never again attempt any intercourse with general society, however numerous or pressing may be the invitations of his friends. He knows too well, he says, that if any subject is especially unpleasing to his hearers, he is sure, by some horrible fatality, to bring it prominently forward ; and if he attempts a compliment, he is ruined for ever. With the strongest ambition to be thought both sensible and good-natured, he often acts as if he were either a perfect idiot, or one of the most malicious of human beings.

The axioms most familiar to men of the world, are passed from one tongue to another without much reflection. They

are merely *parrotted*. Some critics have thought that the advice which *Polonius*, in the tragedy of *Hamlet*, gives his son when he is going abroad, exhibits a degree of wisdom wholly inconsistent with the general character of that weak and foolish old man. But in this case, as in most others of a similar kind, we discover, on closer consideration, that what may seem at the first glance an error or oversight of Shakespeare's, is only another illustration of his accurate knowledge of human nature. The precepts which the old man desires to fix in the mind of *Laertes*, are just such as he might have heard a hundred thousand times in his long passage through the world. They are not brought out from the depths of his own soul. They have only fastened themselves on his memory, and are much nearer to his tongue than to his heart. No one is surprised at the innumerable wise saws and proverbial phrases that issue from the lips of the most silly and ignorant old women in all ranks of life, in town and country, in cottages and in courts. In the conversation of the weakest-minded persons, we often find, as in that of *Polonius*, both "matter and impertinency mixed." His advice is not that of a philosopher, but of a courtier and man of the world. He echoes the common wisdom of his associates.

"Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure,* but reserve thy judgment."

He is indebted to his court education for this mean and heartless maxim. To listen eagerly to the communications of others, and to conceal his own thoughts, is the first lesson that a courtier learns. Let us quote another specimen of his paternal admonitions.

"Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend;
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry."

Polonius might have picked up this marvellous scrap of prudence in some petty tradesman's shop; not, however, in a pawnbroker's, for the sign of which it would form a very forbidding motto. It is similar in tone to the maxims of Poor Richard.† There are a few precepts in the parting advice of *Polonius* of a somewhat higher character; but they are only such as float about the world, and are frequently repeated by people who have no ideas of their own. They are not of that high and original cast which Shakespeare would have put into the mouth of *Hamlet*, or any other thoughtful and noble-hearted personage.

* Opinion.

† "Wealth, as clearly shewn in the preface of our old Pennsylvanian Almanac, entitled *Poor Richard Improved*. Written by Dr. Franklin."

It seems paradoxical to affirm, that men who are out of the world know more of the philosophy of its movements than those who are in it; but it is nevertheless perfectly true, and easily accounted for. The busy man is so rapidly whirled about in the vast machine, that he has not leisure to observe its motion. An observer stationed on a hill that overlooks a battle, can see more distinctly the operations of either army than the combatants themselves. They who have attained success by mere good fortune, are particularly ill-fitted to direct and counsel others who are struggling through the labyrinths of life. A shrewd observer, who has touched the rocks, is a better pilot than he who has passed through a difficult channel in ignorance of its dangers.

The extent of a person's knowledge of mankind is not to be calculated by the number of his years. The old, indeed, are always wise in their own estimation, and eagerly volunteer advice, which is not in all cases as eagerly received. The stale preparatory sentence of "*When you have come to my years, &c.*" is occasionally a prologue to the wearisome farce of second childhood. A Latin proverb says, that "experience teacheth." It sometimes does so, but not always. Experience cannot confer natural sagacity, and without that it is nearly useless. It is said to be an axiom in natural history, that a cat will never tread again the road on which it has been beaten; but this has been disproved in a thousand experiments. It is the same with mankind. A weak-minded man, let his years be few or numerous, will no sooner be extricated from a silly scrape, than he will fall again into the same difficulty in the very same way. Nothing is more common than for old women (of either sex) to shake with a solemn gravity their thin grey hairs, as if they covered a repository of gathered wisdom, when perchance some clear and lively head upon younger shoulders has fifty times the knowledge with less than half the pretension. We are not always wise in proportion to our opportunities of acquiring wisdom, but according to the shrewdness and activity of our observation. Nor is a man's fortune in all cases an unequivocal criterion of the character of his intellect* or his knowledge of the world. Men in business acquire a habit of guarding themselves very carefully against the arts of those with whom they are brought in contact in their commercial transactions; but they are, perhaps, better versed in goods and securities than in the human heart. They wisely trust a great deal more to law papers, than to "the

* There are some few professions, indeed, in which success is a pretty certain indication of learning or of genius.

human face divine," or any of those indications of character, which are so unerringly perused by a profound observer. A great dramatic poet can lift the curtain of the human heart; but mere men of business must act always in the dark, and, taking it for granted that every individual, whatever his ostensible character, may be a secret villain, they will have no transactions with their fellow-creatures, until they have made "assurance double sure," and secured themselves from the possibility of roguery and imposition. They carry this habit of caution and mistrustfulness to such a melancholy extreme, that they will hardly lend a guinea to a father or a brother without a regular receipt. They judge of all mankind by a few wretched exceptions. Lawyers have a similar tendency to form partial and unfavourable opinions of their fellow-creatures; because they come in contact with the worst specimens of humanity, and see more of the dark side of life than other men. Of all classes of men, perhaps, the members of the medical profession have the best opportunity of forming a fair and accurate judgment of mankind in general, and it is gratifying to know that none have a higher opinion of human nature.

It is observable, that men are very much disposed to "make themselves the measure of mankind," or, in other words, when they paint their fellow-creatures, to dip their brush in the colours of their own heart.

" All seems infected that the infected spy,
As all seems yellow to the jaundiced eye."

On the other hand, a frank and noble spirit observes the world by the light of its own nature;—and indeed all who have studied mankind without prejudice or partiality, and with a wide and liberal observation, have felt that man is not altogether unworthy of being formed after the image of his Maker.

Though I have alluded to the tendency of some particular professions to indurate the heart, and limit or warp the judgment, I should be sorry, indeed, if the remarks that I have ventured upon this subject, should be regarded as an avowal of hostility towards any class whatever of my fellow-creatures. I should be guilty of gross absurdity and injustice if I did not readily admit, that intellect and virtue are not confined to one class or excluded from another. Men are generally speaking, very much the creatures of circumstance; but there is no condition of life, in which the soul has not sometimes asserted her independence of all adventitious distinctions; and there is no trade or profession, in which we do not meet with men who are an honour to human nature.

TO LAHA PENNOO : THE GOD OF WAR.

A KHOOND WAR LYRIC.*

I.

GREAT God of battles ! Oh, forgive
 (For thou our wants and weakness saw,)
 If we so long have seemed to live
 Regardless of thy glorious law ;
 Our herds were few, our fields were bare,
 Our bravest warriors bowed with care.

II.

Fate wore for us a scowling brow,
 And Famine haunted cot and bower,
 And some the fever-blasts laid low,
 And some the wild beasts dared devour ;
 Unnerved is many a manly limb,
 And many a dauntless eye is dim.

III.

Oh ! Laha, Pennoo ! Lord of Strife !
 Oh ! watch our weapons as thine own !
 And at each mark of mortal life
 Direct the shaft and hurl the stone ;
 Make wide the wounds on every frame,
 Deface the dead, the living maim.

IV.

Oh ! let our ponderous axes fall
 Like blows of death from tiger-paws,
 Or crush bone, flesh, and garb, and all,
 As 'twixt the fierce hyena's jaws ;
 Let arms not ours as brittle be
 As long pods of the karta tree.

* I refer the reader to Captain S. C. Macpherson's Report upon the Khoonds of the districts of Ganjam and Cuttack, and to the interesting articles upon the subject, in the *Calcutta Quarterly Review*, for curious and valuable information respecting this most singular people. The Khoonds still offer up human sacrifices to one of their deities (the Earth Goddess), a custom to which the British Indian Government are endeavoring to put a stop by earnest remonstrance and persuasion. There is every reason to believe that this laudable object will be speedily attained, by a continuance of the same mild but steady and determined policy which has hitherto influenced the intercourse of our Political agents with the Khoonds.

This war lyric and the lyric that follows are versified from literal prose translations of genuine Khoond poems.

V.

Each aim misguide, unnerve each hand
 Of those to mock our might that dare,
 Make all their weapons light as sand,
 Or mowa blossoms borne on air ;
 Or let our wounds quick dry again,
 As blood-drops on the dusty plain.

VI.

May every axe wear ruddy hue
 As home we come from victory's field ;
 And while our women, proud and true,
 Their stores of sweet refreshment yield,
 May neighbouring Beauties seek our bowers,
 And yearn to mix their blood with ours.

VII.

Our war-gained wealth let all behold,
 Brass vessels, herds and scented leaf,*
 And maids present to parents old
 The trophies of our struggle brief ;
 And fowl and buffaloe and sheep
 Thy shrine in sacred blood shall steep !

VIII.

Oh ! Laha Pennoo ! God of War !
 Not new the favor now we crave ;
 For thy fierce smile, like lurid star,
 Oft led to strife our fathers brave ;
 And we their sons, when danger lours,
 Still hail *their* honored God and *ours* !

TO BERA PENNOO : THE EARTH GODDESS.

A KHOOND INVOCATION.

[*This invocation precedes a human sacrifice.*]

I.

GODDESS of earth ! Dread source of ill !†
 Thy just revenge o'erwhelms us still
 For rites unpaid ;
 But oh ! forgive !—Our stores are small,
 Our lessened means uncertain all,
 Denied thine aid.

* Tobacco.

† She is considered the source of all evil, physical and moral.

II.

Goddess, that taught mankind to feel
 Poison in plants, and death in steel—
 A fearful lore—
 Forgive—forgive ! and ne'er again
 Shall we neglect thy shrine to stain
 With human gore !

III.

Let plenty all our land o'erspread,
 Make green the ground with living bread
 Our pastures fill
 So close with cattle side by side
 That no bare spot may be descried
 From distant hill.

IV.

And when unto the broad flat pool,
 Their thirst to quench, their sides to cool,
 Our herds are led ;
 So num'rous make them that no form
 Of fish or frog, or toad or worm,
 Survive their tread.

V.

So fill with sheep each ample fold
 That he who digs man-deep the mould,
 Their compost rare,
 Meet not a stone. May swine abound
 Until their plough-like snouts the ground
 For seed prepare.

VI.

So fill our cots with childhood's din
 The voice be rarely heard within,
 And ne'er without ;
 Each thatch with crowded poultry hide,
 Give jars that bruise the fountain's side
 With metal stout.

VII.

Oh ! BERA PENNOO ! once again
 Protect us in the grove and plain
 From beasts of prey ;
 Nor let sly snake or tiger bold
 Fright children, save in stories old
 Of fathers grey.

VIII.

Oh ! make it each man's only care
 Yearly to build a store-room fair
 For goods unspent ;
 And we thy rites shall duly pay :—
 Lo ! one bought victim now we slay—
 One life present !*

SONNET.

THE thoughtful and the sensitive have hours
 Of care unspeakable and mysterious gloom,
 When like the gasp for breath within the tomb
 Of buried life, a stifling pain o'erpowers
 The struggling soul. On all things horror lowers,
 And 'neath the deep sense of the hideous doom
 Of death, of life the vanity and fume,
 Of hope the guile, the bravest spirit cowers.
 When thus our hearts despair and weep and quail,
 And feel all friendship vain, and seem alone,
 Yet yearn for sympathies that nought avail,
 Oh God of Heaven ! from thine awful throne
 Look down with pity, and forgive the groan,
 As human fortitude begins to fail !

SONNET.—THE POET.

O'ER the true poet's life there cometh never
 The frost of age. His ardent soul sublime
 Defies the petty tyrannies of Time,
 And proudly laughs at envious Death's endeavour.
 Though wanes the fleshly frame, his spirit ever
 Is warm and radiant as the cloudless clime
 Of Paradise, when earth was in her prime,
 And none e'er dreamed that life and love could sever.
 Though in the cold world common hearts may freeze,
 And deem the poetry of life is dead,
 The Muse's favored son no desert sees,
 No winter feels. Her sunny smile can shed
 A living beauty on the leafless trees,
 And fill with summer thoughts a hoary head.

* The victims are all purchased. An *unbought* life is supposed to be an abomination to the Deity. The price of a human victim varies from fifty to a hundred lives—that is to say, a hundred living brutes, cows, pigs, or sheep.

ON FALSE CRITICISM BY TRUE POETS.

It is not prosaic-minded men only who are bad critics upon poetry : very few poets themselves are good judges of excellence in their own art. They are generally deemed infallible as critics upon poetry ; but it is a great mistake. They often climb the steep of Parnassus with facility themselves, without the power to measure with exactness the progress of their competitors. On the other hand, we sometimes discover at the foot of the glorious mountain a true critic, who, though gifted with a poetical sensibility, instead of aiming to distinguish himself by his own exertions in the art divine, is contented to admire the works of others, and to watch with a generous interest, and define, with impartiality and precision, the achievements of more ambitious natures. Poets are seldom catholic in their taste. They are self-involved, and wedded to favourite theories. If they deviate from their own peculiar walk to judge of that of others, they feel no freshness in the air ; they see no flowers on the roadside ;—

The disenchanted earth
Hath lost its lustre.

Poets *sing* with the tongues of angels, but they *speak* like mortals. When they quit their ethereal elevation and alight upon the common ground of criticism, they often stumble upon errors that are avoided by ordinary men. They are safer on their wings than on their feet. Notwithstanding their occasional inspiration, they are made of the same flesh and blood as other people, and are liable to the same prejudices and infirmities. Jealousy, envy, self-conceit, an exclusive cultivation of some particular department of his art, or a strong idiosyncrasy of mind, or some early association, may as easily occasion an obliquity of judgment in the poet as in the mechanic. An author has an open or secret bias towards that branch of composition which he has most practised himself, and in which he is conscious that he best succeeds. This feeling too often influences his judgment upon the works of writers whose style and subject are essentially different from his own. To support his preferences, he invents or adopts certain theories or canons that would confine all literary merit within the narrow limits of his own sect or school. It is thus that the natural brotherhood of poets has been divided into parties, which regard each other with avowed hostility and contempt. They are blinded to all excellence that is not in some degree akin to their

own. When called upon for their judgment upon the poetry that is opposite to their favourite style, they are by no means to be trusted.* It is only when the production to be criticised is congenial to their own peculiar taste, that they are ready to observe and appreciate its beauties.

Fondly we think we honor merit then
When we but praise ourselves in other men.

It is this spirit of exclusiveness that is the besetting sin of poet-critics, as it is indeed of most men in their own particular arts. In this respect the poets are not worse than others. I am not now waging a war against those inspired benefactors of mankind. I should be ashamed indeed to be guilty of any thing so contrary to my nature. I merely wish to show that we must not too confidently adopt a poet's criticism on poetry, though the world in general are apt to regard it as an authority that is no more to be disputed than a Papal Bull.

Wordsworth marvels how any one can recognise poetical merit in Dryden, or Pope, or Gray. Lord Byron pretended to think Milton and Shakespeare extravagantly over-rated, and hinted pretty clearly, that Pope was immeasurably superior to them both. Are these obliquities of judgment the result of envy and wounded pride, or an all-absorbing self-idolatry? Is it possible that Wordsworth, dimly conscious of his own verbosity, his solemn heaviness of movement, and his want of point, and concentration, and directness, is vexed, in his secret heart, at the universal recognition of Pope's terseness, and polish, and precision in his ethical poems, the pungency of his satires, the inimitable grace of his immortal compliments, and the light gaiety and sparkling wit of his *Rape of the Lock*? Does he wish to lower the value of those qualities which are beyond his reach? Or is he really incapable of perceiving them? Did Byron elevate Pope, as some think that Wordsworth depreciated him—from a purely selfish consideration?

If Pope could be proved to be superior to Shakespeare and Milton, Byron had no need to despair of taking a place in

* The following passage respecting Darwin in one of Anna Seward's letters is very characteristic of the jealousy of poets:—"Since he commenced poet professed, Darwin is become notoriously guilty of the narrow-souled jealousy. Till then he was a warm admirer and generous encomist of poetic effluence, in whatever form it might appear:—now he dislikes odes—now he cannot endure sonnets, now he will not read blank-verse;—all this because the "Botanic Garden" is in the couplet measure, and because it is every where picture and nothing but picture, sentiment and passion are, according to his decision, out of the province of the Muses, and are best expressed in prose."

the very highest rank of poetical genius. Byron was, indeed, a very different poet from Pope; but he did not think so himself, and probably he fancied that his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* was something in the style of the *Dunciad*, and that his *Hints from Horace* might stand a comparison with Pope's *Imitations*. But though Byron's genius was essentially different, in many respects, from that of Pope, there were yet more points of resemblance between them than could be found between the genius of the noble poet and that of his most distinguished contemporaries. He exhibited much of that worldly sagacity and knowledge of daily life which we find in Pope. His quickness of observation, his masculine good sense, and his simple force and clearness of style, were in direct opposition to the transcendental mysteries of Coleridge and Shelley, who wrote for poets and metaphysicians and recluse students, while Byron wrote for men of the world, and in a manner intelligible to every one. But, with all his shrewdness, the noble poet was any thing but a deep and patient thinker, and amidst all Wordsworth's puerilities, there are occasional indications of a philosophy that was beyond the reach of Byron. The latter had no fixed principles of any sort on any subject, and confessed that he was always of the opinion of the last speaker. Nothing can exceed the inconsistent extravagance of his poetical criticisms. In a scale of poetical merit, he elevated Rogers, not above Moore and Campbell only, but above Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge!* No school-boy of twelve years of age would commit so gross an error, if he had read the works of all these poets with an unbiassed mind. Byron thought two or three of Moore's *Melodies* "worth all the epics that ever were composed;" that is to say, worth all the greatest works of Homer and Dante and Milton! He called Spenser "a dull fellow"† and said he could see nothing in him. Chaucer, he thought, contemptible. He

* Byron characterizes the longest and most ambitious of Wordsworth's works as

A clumsy, frowzy poem called the *Excursion*,
Writ in a manner that is my aversion.

And Wordsworth calls Byron "an essentially bad writer."

† If Byron ever read Gabriel Harvey's letter to Spenser, in which he discourages him from proceeding with the *Fairy Queen*, he must have been delighted with such congeniality of taste. Harvey was a man of great learning and elegant accomplishments, and wrote verses which were well thought of by Spenser himself and other good judges of poetical merit. Spenser sent Harvey a specimen of the *Fairy Queen* for his opinion, and his "most special friend" returned it with a prayer that "God or some good angel would put him in a better mind." This condemnation of Spenser's noblest work is accompanied with high praises of some of his inferior productions.

considered Horace Walpole's play of *The Mysterious Mother* "a tragedy of the highest order." Coleridge described it as "the most disgusting, detestable, vile composition, that ever came from the hand of man."* Young's *Revenge* was a favourite play of Byron's, though he had read *Othello*. Whenever Byron ventured to explain the grounds of his critical opinions, he betrayed how little he had studied the first principles of his art. Pope, he argued, was the first of poets, because his chief subject was the first of subjects—*ethics* or *moral truth*,—on which principle, Isaac Watts was a poet of higher rank than Homer. Then, his Lordship, in the same page, contends, with a pleasant inconsistency, that the *subject* of a poet's verse is not the main point for consideration in estimating his powers, but the *execution*? He adds that "He who *executes* best is the highest." But this unfortunate addition goes beyond the mark; for it would make the author of an imperfect, but yet noble epic, inferior in rank to the author of a perfect epigram.

It not unfrequently happens, that the best poets are the worst critics, and the best critics the worst poets. Though Lord Jeffrey was most plentifully ridiculed himself for his ridicule of Wordsworth, he was after all, one of the soundest critics of modern times. Yet he who knew so well how to distinguish good poetry from bad, when he criticized the works of others, invited the attention of the public to some very poor verses of his own.

The rich abundance of genuine talent now visible in English periodical literature, reflects high honour on the character of our country. The speculations on most subjects of human knowledge in our large reviews exhibit profound study, extensive learning, and both force and subtlety of intellect. But yet, in all this noble display of our mental resources, there is, comparatively speaking, very little poetical criticism that deserves the name. In many of the essays on the characteristics of our most distinguished poets, there is unquestionably much power of composition, and much brilliant and ingenious thought. But they are too often deficient

* If Byron mistook the rank of Walpole's *Mysterious Mother*, Coleridge fell into as great an error in speaking of Wordsworth's tragedy of *The Borderers*. In a letter to Mr. Cottle he says, "His (Wordsworth's) drama is absolutely wonderful. You know I do not commonly speak in such abrupt and unmingled phrases, and therefore will the more readily believe me. There are profound touches of the human heart, which I find three or four times in the *Robbers* of Schiller and often in *Shakespeare*; but in Wordsworth there are no inequalities."* This tragedy has since been published. Has the public confirmed Coleridge's criticism? Has any one else seen *Shakespeare without his inequalities* in the page of Wordsworth? The truth is that Wordsworth, though a truly fine poet—in his way the first of living poets—has not one spark of the dramatic faculty.

in honest and careful discrimination, in independence and impartiality of judgment, and in sober truth. Some twenty or thirty years ago, party spirit influenced the most abstract metaphysical discussions, and pure literature, and the most delicate creations of the poet, were turned into materials of political warfare, and the most malignant and atrocious libels. The first question that presented itself to the critic was, not whether the book under notice was a good or a bad one, but whether the author was a Whig or a Tory. As, therefore, the public know before hand that it was not the quality of the poem, but the politics of the poet, that decided his fate, the announcement of a critique in the *Edinburgh* and *The Quarterly* on the same minstrel, if his political opinions were of a marked character, amounted to an intimation that he was to be the object of glorification on one side, and of insult, calumny, and ridicule on the other. No author could expect the least honesty or candour from a reviewer, whose politics were different from his own. People calling themselves gentlemen, and, perhaps, so deemed by their associates, no sooner seated themselves in the critic's chair than they laid aside all the courtesies of civilized life, forgot every principle of honour and humanity, and conducted themselves like drunken disputants or hired assassins. This abominable abuse of the critic's privileges is happily at an end, The natural good sense and good feeling of the public, have, at last, put it down. But extremes meet. Indiscriminate laudation of popular poets, be their politics what they may, has succeeded the practice of converting literary criticism into party and personal controversy. "The life of a wit" is no longer "a warfare upon earth." The re-action is, of course, acceptable, though not exactly what it ought to be; but it will probably be some years yet before criticism shall recover its original position, and resume its peculiar duties, as a cool and impartial judge. At present it "no cold medium knows." It is all passion. The poets are gods, the critics are idolators. The superstitious reverence, for example, with which all our reviewers now regard the poet Wordsworth, renders them quite blind to defects that are absolutely offensive to the general eye, and they speak of him in terms of eulogy that would be extravagant if applied to Shakespeare or to Milton.

Wordsworth is undoubtedly a true poet, but he stands not in the highest rank. He cannot be placed side by side with the widest and loftiest of human intellects, without a most unwarrantable sacrifice of the ordinary critical distinctions. Both he and Lord Byron have a narrow range:—the one reveals calm thoughts and lovely visions—the moods of his own very peculiarly constituted mind—and the other con-

centrates his intellect upon his own vehement and tumultuous feelings, and but multiplies his own image in all his dramas. It is not disputed that Byron's personal emotions are expressed with burning energy, nor that Wordsworth's best passages are enriched with profound and virtuous sentiment, embodied in elevated and perspicuous diction. But these merits, great as they are, do not include all the essential qualifications of a poet of the very highest order. It would be a critical sin of no ordinary magnitude to confound the peculiarities of these two poets, so essentially distinct; but it would sink into a venial and unimportant error if compared with the monstrous absurdity of assigning to the author of *Childe Harold* the varied powers of a Shakespeare, or to the singularly unequal, and too often verbose and feeble poet of the Lakes, the attributes of the mighty and majestic Milton. And yet, such mistakes as these are by no means rare in the criticism of the day.

Most of the younger poets of the time have had their minds built up of the very mixed materials which may be gathered from a study of Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, and Wordsworth. No leader of a new school has yet made his appearance. For a few years Scott, and then Byron, obtained a crowd of imitators, of whom the public very soon grew heartily sick, because the external characteristics of those poets were so easily assumed, that writers of some degree of talent, but utterly deficient in any sort of *genius*, contrived to vulgarize them by nauseous repetition, until they became almost as offensive as fashionable songs in the mouths of street minstrels. When it was discovered that it was possible to adopt a certain tone and diction without one spark of the genius which alone rendered them delightful, the mocking birds were silenced by general ridicule and indignation. Unfortunately, they not only brought contempt upon themselves, but lessened the attraction of the better spirits whom they had mimicked. To this day Scott has hardly recovered from the injury. Byron has suffered less severely, for the passionate energy of his Muse is now appreciated as much as ever—not by the professional critics, indeed, but by the public at large. The periodical reviewers almost unanimously condemn him, as deficient in that metaphysical dreaminess and mystical spirituality, which are regarded as the only true signs that a poet has travelled “in the realms of gold,” or breathed the pure air of the topmost heights of Parnassus. Directness of purpose and transparency of diction are now fatal objections to a poet's claim. If he be understood by the multitude, he must reckon upon being despised by the critics. Intelligibility is a fault not to be forgiven. A cloudy

mysticism covers a multitude of sins. With the critics of this day a turbid stream is always deep. A year or two ago some one published a book of verses called *Studies of Sensation and Event*. Even Leigh Hunt, in some respects one of the very best critics of his time, recognized marks of great genius in this book, which not one educated man in fifty would pretend to understand. But he, like other poets and critics of this age, seems sometimes to entertain the notion that transparency is shallowness, and that when a man's thoughts are enveloped in impenetrable clouds, they must necessarily be instinct with some portion of the electricity of genius. But how often the most common-place ideas and sentiments have been concealed under a veil of mysticism! It is very true that there is a sort of clever jugglery in the deception. A man who can so invert the purpose of language as to give to simple thoughts an air of sublimity or depth, cannot be utterly contemptible in point of intellect; for words are not like the common tools of the mechanic, to be handled with dexterity by a blockhead. But this literary trickery is always absurd and reprehensible, and though it may serve a writer's purpose to a certain extent, and for a short time, it is sure to cause him, sooner or later, to fall into neglect and oblivion. Obscurity of diction is not, however, in all cases, affected. It is more frequently the result of confusion of ideas. He who thinks clearly, can always, if he will, express himself clearly. The thoughts of the most gifted philosophers are not so subtle and profound as to defy expression, nor does any writer's intellect advance so completely out of sight of his own age as to leave him in the solitude of a grandeur incomprehensible to his fellow-creatures.

Though it has been admitted that the studied obscurity which confounds simple readers, and sometimes leads men who should know better into an over-estimate of the writer's capacity, is a sort of literary conjuration beyond the reach of a man utterly destitute of talent, there can be no question that to simplify the expression of subtle images and make depth of thought transparent is a task requiring infinitely nobler and higher powers.

It is greatly to be regretted that deep thinkers in our own time should disdain to use a language which all intelligent Englishmen can read. Perhaps they are unwilling to sacrifice the enjoyment of the ignorant wonder of the vulgar, who always admire the mysticism that mocks their understanding. If certain cloudy metaphysics were rendered a little more intelligible, the critics of the day would talk less of their profundity. To eyes like theirs, an object looms largely through the thick mist, that would be contemptible in the open sunshine.

One of the most celebrated of the poet-critics of modern times was Doctor Samuel Johnson, who displayed extraordinary sagacity and acuteness in analysing the merits of the kind of poetry that was most allied to his own, but who could never pass beyond that limit, with any degree of safety or success. He could dissect with the most severe precision the unmeaning nonsense and cold extravagances of the writers whom he has so oddly styled the "metaphysical poets," though he could ill appreciate their occasional flashes of genuine inspiration; and no critic has written more sensibly upon the character of Pope and Dryden. But Milton, and Gray, and Collins were out of his jurisdiction. They made an appeal to his taste and imagination that he could not answer. He had no eye for their richly-coloured visions, and no ear for their divinest music. He was proof against the "enchanting ravishment" that "would take the prisoned soul" of a more sensitive critic and "lap it in Elysium." Speaking entirely from his own feelings, he closes his review of *Paradise Lost* with the gothic assertion, that its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure. Of the *Lycidas*, which is so full of rich and varied melodies, he was of opinion that the diction was harsh and the numbers unpleasing. He once told Anna Seward that "he would hang a dog that read that poem twice." "What then," said Anna, "must become of me, who can say it by heart, and who often repeat it to myself with a delight which grows by what it feeds on?" "*Die*," said Boswell's Bear, "*in a surfeit of bad taste*.*" This is surely, not only what the lady calls it, "awful impoliteness," but a melancholy proof of Johnson's utter insensibility to some of the most exquisite charms of verse. He who could praise so highly the regular notes of Pope, had no ear for the varied movements of Milton's sonnets, some of which are of such incomparable force and beauty. He has observed, that "of the *best* it can only be said that they are not *bad*." Beattie tells us, Dr. Johnson confessed to him that he never read Milton through till he was obliged to do it, in order to gather words for his Dictionary; and that he spoke "very peevishly" of the "Masque of Comus," in which are

Strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of death.

Of Collins, Johnson's unfavourable judgment is well known. With all his partiality and tenderness for the *man*, he had

* Dr. Joseph Warton has remarked, that "he who wishes to know, whether he has a true taste for poetry or not, should consider whether he is highly delighted or not with the perusal of Milton's '*Lycidas*.'"

no feeling for the poet. He thought his poetry was not without some degree of merit, but confessed that he found it unattractive. "As men," said he, "are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure;"—and this is said of the finest ode-writer in the language—one of the most poetical of poets. The author of the *Ode to Evening*, a poem that floats into the reader's mind like a stream of celestial music, is pronounced harsh and prosaic in his diction. The high tone of Gray's lyric muse, and his exquisite versification, were lost upon the patron of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret and Yalden.* When some one spoke to him of Chatterton, he exclaimed indignantly, "Talk not to me of the powers of a vulgar uneducated stripling." What would he have said of Burns?

Dr. Johnson was one of the best of the commentators upon Shakespeare, and yet this is saying little in his favour; "Bad is the best;" Pope was one of the worst, which is saying not a little against him, Pope pronounced Shakespeare's style the style of a bad age, and observed, in reference to Sackville's *Gordobuc*, that the writers of a succeeding age might have improved, by copying from his drama a propriety in the sentiments and a dignity in the style which are essential to tragedy. Shakespeare ought to have studied Sackville as his model!! Johnson's remarks and explanations are generally sensible and clear, and his preface to Shakespeare's plays is a noble piece of writing; but he never seems to enter thoroughly into the soul of that mighty poet. He could explain an obscure passage more readily than he could feel a fine one. He who thought a dirty street in London was a more agreeable prospect than the most romantic landscape in the world, and who was so insensible to the charms of music, as to wonder how any man of common sense could be so weak and foolish as to own its influence over his feelings, and could never for a moment give up the reins of his imagination into his author's hands and be "pleased he knew not why and cared not wherefore," was not likely to comment upon Shakespeare in a worthy spirit. A critic who would rightly estimate the miraculous productions of that glorious bard, should have an eye for all the loveliness of nature, and an ear for all melodious sounds. Not only his corporeal organs, but all his intellectual faculties should be peculiarly

* The poets in Dr. Johnson's collection were all selected by the booksellers, with the exception of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret and Yalden, who obtained admittance on the especial recommendation of the Doctor, as he himself tells us in his *Life of Dr. Watts*. Spenser and Shakespeare were excluded!

sensitive and alert, or he can never clearly recognize the exquisitely perfect correspondence between the page of Shakespeare and "all the mighty world of eye and ear." Pope, also, was rather too much of a town wit and fashionable satirist to enjoy and appreciate the great poet of universal nature.

"Who was not for an age, but for all time."

His edition of the Prince of dramatic poets has fallen into deserved oblivion. He did not even understand or admire the more artificial, but yet manly and vigorous Ben Jonson. Spence tells us that Pope thought the greater part of that dramatist's productions, poor "*trash*."

But "Rare Ben" himself, though a good poet, was a bad critic. He said of Spenser, that "his stanzas pleased him not, nor his manner;" and that "for some things he esteemed Donne the first poet in the world." Shakespeare, he thought, "wanted art, and sometimes sense"—and why? because he made a blunder in geography!! In the *Winter's Tale* he made Bohemia a maritime country; little dreaming that an error of locality would deduct from the wondrous truth of his delineations of the human heart.

The melodious Waller saw nothing in Milton but an old blind school-master, who had written a dull poem, remarkable for nothing, but its length; and Milton himself preferred the glittering conceits of Cowley to the manly energy and truth of Dryden, whom he pronounced a good rhymist, but no poet. But Dryden, also, with all his real merit as a poet, was a critic whose decisions are never to be relied on; partly because he was prejudiced, partly because he was, comparatively speaking, deficient in imagination and sensibility, and partly because he was a most unblushing adulator. He thought "the matchless Orinda," Catherine Philips, was a great poetess. In this opinion, however, he does not stand alone. Cowley (who deemed Chaucer an old-fashioned wit not worth reviving) wrote an ode to her memory, in which the following lines occur:—

"But if Apollo should design
A woman Laureate to make,
Without dispute he would ORINDA take
Though Sappho and the famous Nine
Stood by and did repine.
* * * * *
The certain proofs of ORINDA's wit
In her own lasting characters are writ,
And they will long my praise of them survive,
Though long perhaps too that may live."

And Thomas Rowe thus speaks of her, in an "Epistle to Daphne."

"ORINDA came
To ages yet to come an ever glorious name!"

Dryden asked the permission of Milton to turn his *Paradise Lost* into rhyme! "Aye, young man," said the venerable old bard, "you may tag rhymes to my verses." On the subject of Milton's blank verse Dryden speaks out very plainly in his dedication to Juvenal, "Neither will I justify Milton for his blank verse, though I may excuse him by the example of Hannibal Caro, and other Italians, who have used it, for whatever the causes he alleges for the abolishing of rhyme, (which I have not now the leisure to examine) his own particular reason is plainly this, *that rhyme was not his talent; he had neither the ease of doing it, nor the graces of it.*" In this same dedication, he tells Lord Halifax, one of the smallest of the minor poets, that he is "the restorer of poetry, the greatest genius, and the greatest judge." Well might Pope exclaim,

"Let but a Lord once own the happy lines
How the wit brightens, how the style refines!"

Halifax himself must have blushed at Dryden's praises. He could hardly have been so ludicrously ignorant of his own real character as a writer, as to receive the following eulogies as no more than a just tribute to his merit.—"There is more salt in your verses than I have seen in any of the moderns, or even of the ancients."—"Your lyric poems are the delight and wonder of this age, and will be the envy of the next."—"I may be allowed to tell your Lordship, who by an undisputed title are the King of Poets, what an extent of power you have," &c.—"I must say, *with all the severity of truth*, that every line of yours is precious."—"In tragedy and satire, I offer myself to maintain against some of our modern critics that this age and the last, particularly in England, have excelled the ancients in both those kinds; and I would instance Shakespeare in the former, and *your Lordship in the latter.*" This is really astounding nonsense, whether it be regarded as a piece of flattery so extravagant as to look like insult, or as an honest criticism written *with all the severity of truth!* Dryden, in his complimentary verses to Roscommon (another noble poet,) does not hesitate to say that

Scarce his own Horace could such rules ordain,
Or his own Virgil sing a nobler strain.

He pronounced the versification of Spenser inferior to that of Waller. He had a profound respect for Rymer, whom he calls "a great critic." This *great critic* is now only known to a few readers of literary history by his audacious and absurd attack upon Shakespeare's plays, especially of *Othello*, which he elegantly styles "a bloody farce without salt or savour," and which can only fill the head with

"vanity, confusion, *tintamarre*, and *jingle-jangle*." "There is nothing," he says, "in the noble Desdemona, that is not below any kitchen-maid—no woman bred out of a pig-stye could talk so meanly." "In the neighing of a horse," says this "*great critic*," "or in the growling of a mastiff, there is as much meaning, there is as lively expression, and may I say more humanity, than many times in the tragical flights of Shakespeare." That Dryden should have respected the judgment of such a critic as this is strange indeed. I think Rymer even exceeds Voltaire in abusive hostility to our Prince of Dramatists. The French poet-critic, as every Englishman remembers, has spoken of Shakespeare's "monstrous farces called tragedies," and wondered that a nation which had produced *Cato* (Addison's collection of cold and stilted dialogues in the dramatic form), should tolerate such plays as *Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *Othello*! But if Voltaire has done British genius a gross injustice, he has suffered something in return. Gray declared that Voltaire (except as a writer of plays) was entirely without genius. Neither could he perceive any talent whatever in Rousseau's *Nouvelle Heloise*. He spoke in a similar strain of several British authors. He said that David Hume had continued all his days an infant, but had, unhappily, been taught to read and write. He saw no merit in Thompson's exquisite *Castle of Indolence*; and he thought Collins deficient in imagery! "He (Collins) deserves," said he, "to live some years, but will not." It would seem that the time has long gone by, when

"The sacred name
Of poet and of prophet was the same."

Gray, in his verses to the artist who embellished an edition of his poems, very oddly inverts the merits of Pope and Dryden; by speaking of the *energy* of the first and the *melody* of the second.

To the list of bad critics I am compelled to add the name of Collins, for he has ventured to assert in his Epistle to Sir Thomas Hanmer, that Fletcher excelled Shakespeare in the illustration of female tenderness.

*His every strain the smiles and graces own,
But stronger Shakespeare felt for man alone.*

It would be a waste of words to expose this egregious error, though I believe Collins only echoes Dryden. Gifford in his edition of Massinger almost repeats them both. He contends that Fletcher is at least as *pathetic* as Shakespeare. The pathos of *Lear* does not seem to have touched the author of the "*Burial and Mæviad*," a coarse and savage satire in which helpless women are insulted, and "butterflies

broken on a wheel." But in Gifford's estimation, not only is Fletcher at least Shakespeare's equal in pathos, but Beaumont is as sublime, Ben Jonson as nervous, and Massinger superior in rythmical modulation. The sole point of unrivalled excellence that he leaves to Shakespeare is his wit!—and yet Gifford was for many years one of our leading critics! We ought not to be surprised that he pronounced Hazlitt a blockhead, and that he could discover neither genius nor common sense in Keats and Shelley. According to Gifford, "*the predominating character of Mr. Shelley's poetry is its frequent and total want of meaning.*" "It is not too much to affirm," he says, (in speaking of the Prometheus, &c.) "that in the whole volume there is not one original image of nature, one simple expression of human feeling, or one new association of the appearances of the moral with those of the material world."

There is a strange coincidence of opinion between those two great critics, Rymer and Gifford. "Shakespeare's genius," says the former, "lay for comedy and humour. In tragedy he appears quite out of his element; his *brains are turned*—he raves and rambles about without any coherence, any spark of reason, or any rule to control him, to set bounds to his phrensy."

Anna Seward, a poetess of some note in her time, and still spoken of with respect by Southey, ranked Darwin and Hayley amongst the greatest of our bards. Of the former she thus writes:—"He *knew* that his verse would live to distant ages; but he also knew that it would survive by the slowly accumulating suffrages of kindred genius, when contemporary jealousy had ceased to operate." How vainly did the poet lay this flattering unction to his soul, and how completely was Anna Seward mistaken in all her sympathetic anticipations of her friend's future fame! Of the feeble and half-forgotten Hayley, she speaks with even greater warmth, and in a style of prophecy which the lapse of a very few years has rendered absolutely ludicrous. "Hayley is indeed a true poet. He has the *fire* and *energy* of Dryden without his absurdity (!) and he has the wit and ease of Prior (!) His beautiful Epistles on Painting—far even above these, his Essay on Epic Poetry, together with the fine Ode to Howard, will be considered as amongst the first Delphic ornaments of the 18th century." But even Cowper thought highly of Hayley and Darwin—and Miss Seward was not a worse critic than the "true poet," whose productions are "amongst the first Delphic ornaments of the eighteenth century." In one of Hayley's letters to her, in alluding to Burns, he compares him to some obscure and humble versifier who had gained

her patronage. "I admire the Scottish Peasant," says he, "but *I do not think him superior to your poetical carpenter.*"

Burns himself had a most extravagant opinion of Fergusson as a poet, whom he preferred to Allan Ramsay. Thomas Warton, though a great admirer of Milton's genius, thought nature had not blessed the divine old bard with an ear for verse. Akenside, who, observes Johnson, "upon a poetical question, has a right to be heard," said that "he would regulate his opinion of the reigning taste by the fate of Dyer's *Fleece*; for if that were ill received, he should not think it any longer reasonable to expect fame from excellence." The prophecy of some wit in allusion to this poem, that Dyer would be buried *in his own wool*, would have been fulfilled almost to the letter, if it were not for his "*Grongar Hill*," on which he still breathes the vital air. Scott of Amwell, the Quaker poet, made a desperate attempt to rescue the "*Fleece*" from oblivion, and vainly endeavoured to persuade the public that it was much superior to the *Grongar Hill*.

Addison, who has been so much praised for his critique on Milton, was after all but another example of the fallibility of poetical critics. In his versified "Account of the *greatest English Poets*," he omits all allusion to Shakespeare, but characterizes Roscommon as "the best of critics and of poets too!" After having taken due notice of numerous "great" poets, he recollects that "justice demands one labour more,"

"The noble Montague remains unnamed."

That *Shakespeare* was unnamed was of little consequence! But though the critic and poet was, as he elegantly expresses himself,

"Tired with rhyming, and would fain give o'er,

he would have deemed himself highly blame-worthy had he omitted Montague! His list of great poets would have been deplorably incomplete! Though he is so enraptured with Montague, he says little in favour of Chaucer or Spenser. Of the former, he observes,

"In vain he jests in his unpolished strain;

and of the latter he tells us, that though his tales "amused a barbarous age," (the age of Shakespeare, Bacon, Jeremy Taylor, Beaumont and Fletcher, &c. &c.!)

"An age as yet uncultivate and rude,"

That he is no longer to be tolerated:—

"But now the mystic tale that charmed of yore
Can charm an *understanding age* no more."

It is difficult to say whether the poetry or the criticism of this account be the most contemptible, and some readers may be disposed to exclude Addison altogether from the list of poet-critics ; but whatever was the character of his verse, it is certain that there was a truly poetical spirit in some of his Virgilian prose. His Vision of Mirza is conceived with the fancy of a poet, and conducted with consummate taste and judgment. How exquisitely fresh and oriental is the opening scene on the high hill of Bagdat, where we are introduced to the celestial visitant who plays on a musical instrument the sound of which was "exceeding sweet, and wrought into a variety of tunes that were inexpressibly melodious." And how truly poetical is the unexpected close, in which the dream of Mirza is suddenly, yet softly, broken, and he awakes to a beautiful reality :—

"At length, said I, shew me now, I beseech thee, the secrets that lie hid under those dark clouds which cover the ocean on the other side of the rock of adamant. The Genius making me no answer, I turned again to the vision which I had been so long contemplating : but instead of the rolling tide, the arched bridge, and the happy islands, I saw nothing but the long hollow valley of Bagdat, with oxen, sheep and camels, grazing upon the sides of it."

Here is the imagery and the music of a true poet. It is a pity that Addison ever wrote in verse.

There is a poem of Beattie's, written upon "the report of a monument to be erected in Westminster Abbey to the memory of Churchill," that is not to be found in the common editions, from which it is very properly omitted. It contains some wretched criticism, and what is a great deal worse, it betrays a spirit of malignity that is perfectly disgusting. In this precious production, he tries to persuade the world that the muse of the vigorous and animated Churchill, was "*dri-
velling and dull* ;" that he wrote nothing but "coarse dog-grel," and that in fact he was,

"By nature uninspired, untaught by art."

It is true that Churchill wasted his powers on local and temporary subjects, and that his poetry is now in consequence but little read ; but there has been no change in the opinion of the public respecting the character of his genius. With all his faults he was a powerful and manly satirist. It seems difficult to believe that the grossest prejudice could fail to recognize the vast power of his satire, in which almost every word is a deadly blow. To all who have read, in the *Rosciad*, the character of Mr. Fitzpatrick (the hero of Garrick's *Fribble-riad*), Beattie's contempt for Churchill's genius must seem the severest argument against his own judgment. In the same poem in which Beattie thus betrays his want of critical

sagacity or common candour with respect to Churchill, he shows that he could not even commend his favourite poets with any discrimination. His praise almost looks like irony ;

“ Praise undeserved is censure in disguise.”

He speaks of “ Gray’s *unlabored art*,” (a poet who with great genius was the *most laborious artist* in English literature ;) and of Pope’s “ energy divine,” an expression by which Pope himself had so much more happily characterized his poetical father, Dryden.

Few poets have exhibited a greater delicacy of taste in his own writings than Oliver Goldsmith, and yet he was but a very ordinary person when seated in the critic’s chair, if we may judge from his brief comments in his collection of the “ Beauties of English Poetry.” He had the imprudence and audacity to insert amongst these selections, intended chiefly for the use of schools, two of the most flagrantly indecent of Prior’s Tales, which effectually ruined it as a pecuniary speculation, and perhaps somewhat injured the moral character of the compiler. As a specimen of Goldsmith’s style of criticism in his “ Beauties of English Poetry,” a work very rarely met with, I will quote a few of his notices *entire*. It is just the kind of criticism that one might expect from a school-girl ; it is vague and common-place, and full of verbal repetitions.

Philips’ Epistle to the Earl of Dorset.

“ The opening of this poem is *incomparably fine*, the latter part is tedious and trifling.”

Baucis and Philemon.

“ This poem is *very fine* ; and though *the same strain as the preceding* (Han’s Carvel), *is yet superior*.”

On the Use of Riches.

“ This poem, as Mr. Pope tells us himself, cost much attention and labour ; and from the *easiness* that appears in it, one would be apt to think as much.”

An Epistle to a Lady.

“ This little poem by Mr. Nugent is very pleasing. The *easiness* of the poetry and the *justness of the thoughts* constitute its principal beauty.”

A Pastoral Ballad.

“ The ballads of Mr. Shenstone are chiefly commended

for the natural *simplicity of the thoughts* and the *harmony of the versification*. However they are not excellent in either."

Phæbe, a Pastoral.

"This by Dr. Byron (*m?*) is a *better effort than the preceding.*"

These are not partial or broken extracts—they are entire notices. That Goldsmith should deny to Shenstone's ballads the merit of "harmony," is strange enough; but it is still stranger that esteeming them good neither in the versification nor the thoughts, he should have inserted one of them amongst his "*Beauties of British Poetry.*" Goldsmith's verbal repetitions remind me of the criticism in a publication, which is got up with great external elegance—I allude to the "*Book of Gems.*" Every poet is there represented as remarkable for some excellence or defect "TO A DEGREE." Of Coleridge, it is said "his judgment and taste were sound to a degree"—of Lamb that he was "amiable to a degree,"—of Wilson, that his countenance is "gentle to a degree,"—and of Hogg, that he "was kind and liberal to a degree."

Wordsworth calls Dryden's celebrated music-ode, "a drunken song,"* and professes to entertain a profound contempt for some of the finest poetry of Burns.* The celebrated Dr. Wolcott (Peter Pindar) used to speak in the same style of Dryden's ode. "How woefully," he would often exclaim, "have mankind been mistaken in their admiration of this *paltry production!*" In a note to the first stanza of "*Frogmore Fete*" he thus alludes to it:—"In spite of all the praises bestowed on "*Alexander's Feast*, I dare pronounce it a downright drunken Bartholomew-fair scene: the poetry too but little superior to the subject." Perhaps Peter Pindar himself has too much of the coarseness and vulgarity which he here attributes to Dryden to deserve the name of a poet; but he was a truly popular writer in his day, and the booksellers granted him an annuity for the copy-right of his works. He, however, very nearly survived his reputation, though he anti-

* Mason objected "that his ode was too much of the Ballad species—too remote from the lyric genius." The line of pathetic iteration,

Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,

he said was devoid of all meaning, and tended to excite something bordering on the ludicrous rather than to add to the pathetic impression already excited. He thought Polwhele's translations from Theocritus for smoothness and harmony of versification considerably exceeded the original.

cipated immortality as an author, and prided himself on the fact that his verses had been translated into six different languages. The famous Polish general, Kosciusko, was one of his admirers, and amused himself with his poems in prison at St. Petersburg. When the Duke of Kent was in America, he saw a pretty little girl in a cottage, and on asking her what books she read, she replied, "The Bible and Peter Pindar." A popularity, however extensive, seems no certain indication of lasting fame. Mrs. Hemans in one of her letters (published in Chorley's "Memorials" of her) records the following very remarkable conversation between herself and the great poet of the Lakes. "We were sitting on a bank" (she writes) "overlooking Rydal Lake, and speaking of Burns. I said, 'Mr. Wordsworth, do you not think his war ode, '*Scots wha hae, wi Wallace bled*,' has been a good deal overrated? especially by Mr. Carlyle, who calls it the noblest lyric in the language?' 'I am delighted to hear you ask the question;' was the reply, 'over-rated?—trash!—stuff!—miserable inanity! without a thought—without an image!' &c. &c. Then he recited the piece in a tone of unutterable scorn; and concluded with a *Da Capo* of 'wretched stuff!—'"

Wordsworth and Coleridge see no beauty in Gray's elegy, though the latter had the most extravagantly favourable opinion of the sentimental poetry of Bowles, and praises it for its "*manliest melancholy*." He could write too a laudatory address to the Muse of Amos Cottle! Keats styled all the poets of the Frenchified English school, "a school of dolts."

———"Ye taught a school
Of dolts, that smooth, inlay and clip and fit
Till like the certain wands of Jacob's wit
Their verses tallied; *easy was the task*."

Perhaps Keats would not have found the composition of another "Rape of the Lock," quite so *easy a task* as he imagined. There is even in the "Essay on Man" and the "Prologue to *Cato*," something more than

"A puling infant's force
That swayed about upon a rocking-horse,
And thought it Pegasus."

Sir Walter Scott, though he exhibited a noble impartiality and a rare self-insight when speaking of his own poems, was not a first-rate judge of the poetry of other men. "He often said to me," (says his friend Ballantyne,) "that neither his own nor any modern popular style of composition, was that from which he derived the most pleasure. I asked him what it was; he answered,"—(what does the reader suppose? *Shakes-*

peare's, Spencer's, Milton's, Dryden's, Pope's, Burns's? Oh! no—) "*Dr. Johnson's (!)* and that he had more pleasure in reading '*London*' and '*The Vanity of Human Wishes*' than any other poetical composition he could mention." Scott, however, is the only poet I have read of, who judged fairly and yet unfavourably of his own poetical compositions. He always said that they could never live: and were not to be compared with the works of many of his contemporaries. In the meridian of his own poetical popularity he felt that those comparatively neglected writers, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley, were far greater poets, and more deeply touched with the holy fire of inspiration. Nor did Scott ever prefer his worst pieces to his best. In this respect he exhibited a far clearer judgment than many other celebrated authors. Petrarch doted on his *Africa*, Milton on his *Paradise Regained*, Prior on his *Solomon*, and Byron on his *Hints from Horace*.

I have now, I think, sufficiently established my position that good poets are not *always* good critics, and that we ought not to trust too implicitly to their authority on a question of poetical criticism. But I should not wish it to be supposed either that I am hostile to the poets, to whom we are all so much indebted, or that I consider them worse judges of poetry than other men. I only contend that their judgment is *not infallible*; but I still think they are *greatly better critics upon poetry than the generality of mankind*. If we could suppose a poet with no exclusiveness of taste, (and there may be many such,) we might be pretty sure that his superior sensibility to poetic excellence, would make him a much better critic than other men; and even those poets who are wedded to some particular branch or style of art, are generally the best judges of the merit of productions in their own favourite department. It is a rare thing indeed to meet with a true critic upon either of the fine arts, but though such a judge is not often to be found, he is more frequently to be found amongst the artists themselves than elsewhere. It is on this account that a poet so fondly treasures up to his dying day a single word of praise from the lips of some great master in his profession. "I really believe," exclaims Sir Egerton Brydges, "that three or four cherished lines in the hand of Wordsworth upon one of my sonnets, saved me from a total mental wreck; and the recovery was completed by the letters of Southey and Lockhart, which have been impressed so deeply on my heart, that, while it beats, they will never be effaced or faded."

CONSOLATIONS OF EXILE.

[OR AN EXILE'S ADDRESS TO HIS DISTANT CHILDREN.]

I.

O'ER the vast realm of tempest-troubled Ocean—
 O'er the parched lands that vainly thirst for showers—
 Through the long night—or when nor sound nor motion
 Stirs in the noon of day the sultry bowers—
 Not all un'compained by pleasant dreams
 My weary spirit panteth on the way ;
 Still on mine inward sight the subtle gleams
 That mock the fleshly vision brightly play.
 Oh! the heart's links nor time nor change may sever,
 Nor Fate's destructive hand, if life remain ;
 O'er hill, and vale, and plain, and sea, and river,
 The wanderer draws the inseparable chain!*

II.

Fair children! still, like phantoms of delight,
 Ye haunt my soul on this strange distant shore,
 As the same stars shine though the tropic night
 That charmed me at my own sweet cottage door.
 Though I have left ye long, I love not less ;
 Though ye are far away, I watch ye still ;
 Though I can ne'er embrace ye, I may bless,
 And e'en though absent, guard ye from each ill!
 Still the full interchange of soul is ours,
 A silent converse o'er the waters wide,
 And Fancy's spell can speed the lingering hours,
 And fill the space that yearning hearts divide.

III.

And not alone the written symbols show
 Your spirits' sacred stores of love and truth,
 Art's glorious magic bids the canvas glow
 With all your grace and loveliness and youth ;
 The fairy forms that in my native land
 Oft filled my fond heart with a parent's pride,
 Are gathered near me on this foreign strand,
 And smilingly, in these strange halls, reside !
 And almost I forget an exile's doom,
 For while your filial eyes around me gleam,
 Each scene and object breathes an air of home,
 And time and distance vanish like a dream!

* And drags at each remove a lengthening chain—*Goldsmith.*

IV.

Oh! when sweet Memory's radiant calm comes o'er
 The weary soul, as moonlight glimmerings fall
 O'er the hushed ocean, forms beloved of yore
 And joys long fled, her whispers soft recall;
 At such an hour I live and smile again,
 As light of heart as in that golden time
 When, as a child, I trod the vernal plain,
 Nor knew the shadow of a care or crime.
 Nor dream of death, nor weariness of life,
 Nor freezing apathy, nor fierce desire,
 Then chilled a thought with unborn rapture rife,
 Or seared my breast with wild ambition's fire.

V.

From many a fruit and flower the hand of Time
 Hath brushed the bloom and beauty; yet mine eye,
 Though Life's sweet summer waneth, and my prime
 Of health and hope is past, can oft espy
 Amid the fading wilderness around
 Such lingering hues as Eden's holy bowers
 In earth's first radiance wore, and only found
 Where not a cloud of sullen sadness lours.
 Oh! how the pride and glory of this world
 May pass unmirrored o'er the darkened mind,
 Like gilded banners o'er the grave unfurled,
 Or Beauty's witcheries flashed upon the blind.

VI.

Though this frail form hath felt the shafts of pain,
 Though my soul sickens for her native sky,
 In visionary hours my thoughts regain
 Their early freshness, and soon check the sigh
 That sometimes from mine inmost heart would swell
 And mar a happier mood. Oh! then how sweet,
 Dear Boys! upon remembered bliss to dwell,
 And here your pictured lineaments to greet!
 'Till Fancy, bright Enchantress, shifts the scene
 To British ground, and musical as rills,
 Ye laugh and loiter in the meadows green,
 Or climb with joyous shouts the sunny hills!

Calcutta, September 4, 1834.

ON CLAIRVOYANCE.

IN almost all new discoveries, more or less of falsehood and pretension is mixed up with sounder matter, and so it may be with Clairvoyance. We have no right to confound the mistakes and rogues of its professors with the nature of the science itself.

But it is not fools and impostors only who have maintained the cause of Clairvoyance. Persons of high character—some of the most honest, most able and best educated men in England—are in the ranks of its believers and supporters.

Pretensions of an extraordinary and apparently supernatural character are usually associated with some religious scheme, and adduced as a proof of the favor of heaven. But in this case there is no appeal to superstition. Sane and sober men in all classes of society, have supported the cause of Clairvoyance, from no other ostensible or discoverable motive than a disinterested regard for truth and science.

We cannot but acknowledge the force of the testimony in its favor. The apparent proofs stagger us. We know that much that has seemed impossible to one generation has been a truism to another. We confess that human reason is imperfect—human knowledge limited—and that no man is able to define infallibly the laws of nature either physical or spiritual; and we are perplexed, but not convinced.

In all ages and in all countries men have deceived others or been deceived themselves. Accumulated evidence, apparently the most unexceptionable, has testified to the truth of impossibilities, or what we yet think to be such. The dishonesty of mankind is too well known to be insisted upon. Their scepticism is at one time unreasonably obstinate: their credulity at another is unbounded.

An eminent English judge, a still more eminent English philosopher, believed in witchcraft:—believed that a poor decrepid old woman could kill a whole herd of cows by an “ejaculation of the eye.” A school-boy of the nineteenth century laughs at the superstition of a race of intellectual giants, and, perhaps, in the midst of his merriment, makes mistakes from a blind unbelief that will one day astonish his own children.

We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow,
Our wiser sons no doubt will think us so.

What then are we to believe, and what reject? Or must we always remain in a state of ignorant suspense?

"There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Never was this hacknied quotation *more* hacknied than in this nineteenth century, in which almost every year is marked by some strange discovery that is received for a time with indignant incredulity. Philosophical sceptics are thrown into a false position. They are sometimes compelled to believe at last what, according to the ordinary laws of reason, they *ought not* to believe. Things apparently impossible become flat truisms, and the most astounding facts make a mockery of all *à priori* logic.

The evidence which is convincing to some minds is unsatisfactory to others. Even ocular demonstration is not always enough. When a man pretends to see through stone walls and across the Atlantic ocean, and read the smallest type with his great toe or his little finger, *and to all appearance actually does so*, the first mental movement of the perplexed observer is that feeling of mingled wonder and incredulity with which all men regard the unaccountable feats of a professed juggler. It is quite true that in withholding their belief in those new and marvellous facts which contradict all previous experience, men may eventually find themselves in error, but, generally speaking, it is an error on the safe side. For every single mistake that the sceptic falls into, the credulous man falls into a thousand. A sense of the imperfection of human reason and the narrow limits of our knowledge instead of making us more credulous should make us more cautious. A man partially blind must walk warily and not tread rashly upon unknown ground. The doubter is often charged with presumption for referring every decision to his own reason and experience. But how can he do otherwise? It is a necessity of our nature. The credulous and the sceptical, the vain and the diffident are in this respect alike.

What can we reason but from what we know?

We may admit the vast superiority of other men's reason or knowledge to our own, but even in making this admission—in arriving at this judgment—we use what reason and knowledge we possess.

The sceptics are reminded that most of the greatest discoveries in science were at first rejected by mankind. This is very true. But the fact that what was at first rejected was at last universally received is no proof that the sceptics were unreasonable:—they rightly demanded extraordinary proofs of extraordinary claims upon their belief. If men did not

so act, they would be exposed to perpetual deception. There was nothing absurd in the King of Burmah's refusing to believe on ordinary evidence that in northern winters water becomes solid. The evidence should be proportioned to the likelihood or improbability of the asserted fact and solid water seemed any thing but a probable thing to his mind. We should believe on the simple affirmation of a notorious liar that it rained on a certain day, or that he had had eggs and bacon for his breakfast unless there were some particular reason, independent of his general character, to believe the contrary ; but if a man of even proverbial honesty and vast scientific acquirements were to assert that two and two make five, that the moon is made of green cheese, or that half-a-dozen angels waited upon him every evening as he went to bed and drew his curtains for him, wished him good night with a low bow, and then departed, or should insist that the earth is flat and square, or like Kepler, inform us, that it is a great animal and spouts up the ocean like a whale, we should trust him less than we should trust the notorious liar.

If men of sense have often mistakenly rejected new discoveries in science, it is not in the same spirit in which they reject marvels that are not merely *beyond* their knowledge but in *direct contradiction* to it. If an able chemist were to announce some wonderful new fact—we might, under certain circumstances, withhold our belief for a time, but we should not be obstinately incredulous. We should acknowledge at once our comparative ignorance of chemistry and the possibility of his being right. We should be quite open to conviction upon moderate evidence ; but when a man asserts that he can see without his eyes, or hear in the heart of London all that is passing in Calcutta, and that he can communicate those powers to other men by a motion of his hand or a glance of his eye, we are very apt to regard our own experience and that of the world in general as a sufficient set-off against his individual assertion. We at all events insist on proofs as extraordinary as the things of which he tells us.

It would seem that if Mesmeric Clairvoyance were "a true thing," it would be capable of immediate and irresistible demonstration ; and yet, though many worthy and sensible men are satisfied of its truth, there are a great many more, who, though they constantly attend lectures and experiments on the subject, remain unconvinced. How is this ? The fact is, that even in the most favourable accounts of these experiments, there is too often something suspicious and unsatisfactory. The person who, it is averred, can tell you what

you thought or did perhaps ten years ago, can give you no account of what you thought or did the year before or after. The inspiration is fitful, the knowledge fragmentary, like those of gipsy fortune-tellers. We know not therefore how much to attribute to accident or guess work. A friend of ours had partial inflammation inside his throat. There was no external sign of it, and he wore a thick neckcloth. A clairvoyante without the least hint having been given to her on the subject, informed him that she beheld the inflamed spot, and described its size and colour. She prescribed a remedy, which proved perfectly successful ! If the clairvoyante saw through the neckcloth and intervening flesh of the throat, they were to her *transparent* ;—was the inflamed flesh the only solid part presented to her eye ? Where does the vision rest ? If solid substances are like thin air or glass, how are they distinguished from each other ?

The clairvoyant will only answer questions that are to his liking, and is always represented as wilful and wayward, so that when an unwelcome difficulty occurs, there is a ready excuse for silence. We are warned that he must not be harassed—that when he finds himself doubted, or questioned too searchingly, he takes offence, and becomes obstinately dumb. He must be indulged like a juggler, and not put out of sorts, or taken off his guard. He can read a book perhaps with his eyes closed in a particular manner, but when another plan of obstructing the natural action of the sight is adopted, the experiment is less successful. But if a man were really capable of seeing external objects without the use of his eyes, one would imagine that the matter could be readily demonstrated beyond the possibility of a doubt, in a single minute, and in a thousand different ways. It would not require hundreds of public lectures and experiments to prove the fact. If a thick screen or covering be really no impediment to the sight of the clairvoyant, if he can see through stone walls and across the Atlantic, why should the book be held near to him and open ? An examiner should keep the closed book in his pocket, and the clairvoyant might then be called upon to tell the title of the book and read any particular page or passage of it. Every individual visitor might bring his book and thus test the truth to his satisfaction. There would then be no possibility of collusion. But such simple and direct measures of arriving at the truth are generally evaded.

If Mesmeric Clairvoyance be really what it pretends to be, it must work an unspeakably awful and important change in human nature, and even for a time, perhaps, disorganize society. This is, indeed, no just objection to the reception of

the truth, if truth it be. For truth is great and will prevail. It must eventually resist all opposition, and it is wise to receive it at once, and at all hazards, let it come in what shape it may. Only permit us to be first thoroughly assured that we do not mistake falsehood for truth—a painted devil for an angel. Under the influence of such a power as that of Clairvoyance, unless our moral nature could be brought to keep pace with the improvement of our intellectual knowledge, we should possess the omniscience of gods with the passions and frailties of men. What a terrible combination! All the secret jealousies and dislikes, and envious desires and malignant hopes, which being concealed and suppressed by conventional forms, are prevented from disturbing the peace and happiness of society, would then be brought into open daylight, and would set the world on fire! The foul blots of foul minds would sicken us with their obtrusiveness. The blemishes of the purest would make us despair of human virtue. There would be no privacy for Hymen or for Venus; no protection against the prying eye or the curious ear. Our thickest garments would be as thin air. Stone walls would not screen the harem. The lover's whispered vows might as well be bawled out in the public street by the town crier.

Alas! there would be fearful revelations indeed as well as ludicrous ones. All the moral darkness and disease, and rottenness of poor humanity would meet us at one dreadful view! We are not surprised that the believers in Mesmeric Clairvoyance can think of nothing else—that they are absorbed in the contemplation of a discovery that would revolutionize the world. Once admit its truth and almost every other subject of human thought must shrink into utter insignificance.

Even the mighty and wondrous agency of steam is hardly worth a thought when compared with a science which enables people to see physical objects without the use of their fleshly organs; to reveal the source and condition and cure of secret diseases; to lift up the thick curtain of the past, and read the innermost secrets of the human heart! The discovery of steam has changed the face of external things—has made the distant near, and may be said in some degree to have lengthened life by increasing the value of time and labour, or enabling us to move further and do more in one hour than our ancestors could do in twenty-four;—but Mesmeric Clairvoyance (*if true*) gives us that sort of power which has hitherto been in all ages and countries attributed to either the deity or the devil. It extends the boundaries of the human mind. It is an invasion into the spiritual world. It annihilates space

and matter ; it makes a Londoner a next-door neighbour of a denizen of Calcutta ; it makes solid masonry as transparent as glass ; it enables us to rend the veil of human hypocrisy—to bare every thought in the heart's most secret recesses, and to follow its minutest movements with more precision than we can trace with a microscope the circulation of the blood in transparent animalculæ. The clairvoyant is like the wonderful Arabian Dervise, who dived into the bodies of men and became familiar with the secrets of their souls.

If the science of Mesmeric Clairvoyance be really true, it will soon arrive at a rapid and fearful development, and operate an unspeakably important change upon human society. What are the miracles of science—what is Captain Warner's bottled lightning—though it rival in effect the bolts of Jupiter—compared with that power which enables us to indicate the cure of all physical diseases, and to discover all moral truth ? To a clairvoyant unspoken thoughts are as clear as the close-brought tickings of a watch, and even our transitory evil wishes and intentions, which pass half unconsciously through our own minds, may be permanently reflected upon his. The bare possibility of there being any truth, therefore, in a science, which numbers amongst its supporters and professors many able and honest men, and which has already been illustrated by experiments which have puzzled and perplexed the sceptical, renders it imperative on men of sense and thought to give the subject their most serious and candid attention, and to beware how they treat it with ridicule and contempt.

The first effect of the full introduction of Clairvoyance into the world, like the first effect of most great revolutions in society, would be terrible indeed. But, perhaps, in the end it would improve our nature ; for if our innermost mental movements were exposed to the eye of man as they now are to the eye of God, we should find the necessity of putting a strong moral restraint even upon our thoughts. It would banish all hypocrisy for ever !

We repeat that though firm believers in simple Mesmerism, we are neither believers nor unbelievers in *Mesmeric Clairvoyance*. In this article we have given the arguments on both sides without pretending to direct the reader in his decision.

We take it for granted that Clairvoyance, if there be such a thing at all, must be a part of the general nature of humanity, and not an exclusive gift to individuals. The faculty may at first seem partially distributed, only because it has been but partially developed, and because we are yet ignorant of all the signs of its existence and of the mode in which it should be cultivated.

LINES,

ADDRESSED TO TWO SISTERS, AND WRITTEN IN THEIR ALBUM.

BRIGHT fragrant bowers, and clouds of glorious hue—
 Rich meadows in the yellow sunset sleeping—
 Proud birds on radiant wings through regions blue
 O'er hill and vale their course majestic keeping—
 Gay butterflies, with gold and purple dotted,
 [Flowers of the air for which earth's flowers seem made,]—
 The couchant mountain like a leopard spotted,
 'Neath freckled skies, with sunshine and with shade—
 The vast sea-waves—the shining level lake—
 Green nooks, where timid Peace is often hiding—
 Wild echoes that a mystic music make—
 The sound of waters through the lone wood gliding—
 The rosy morn, bright noon, and eve serene—
 The twilight dim, by which the day is bounded—
 The swarthy night, so like an Ethiop Queen,
 In spangled vest, and by dark hosts surrounded,—
 All sights and sounds that charm the eye or ear,
 In loveliest landscapes and in sweetest hours,
 Have fired my soul with feelings deep and dear
 As e'er thrilled passionate bards of loftier powers.

These are enchantments exquisite and true,
 And seem to breathe a bright immortal story
 Of happiness and Eden ; for the hue
 Is not quite gone of that fair garden's glory ;
 The Maker's hand is seen in all around,
 Beauty and matchless art a God revealing,
 And blind and dull as moles beneath the ground
 They who for these have neither sight nor feeling.

Yet hill and dale, and ocean and the sky,
 And living things that own not mind's relation,
 Though lovely, never to the heart or eye
 Are dearest, fairest of our God's creation.
 Thought kindleth thought, and soul is linked to soul ;
 We yearn for interchange of every feeling ;
 We pant for sympathy—the aim—the goal
 Of earthly dreams and of all human dealing.

I love the hill and dale, the sea and sky,
 I love their happy tenants,—but oh ! never
 Could this warm heart renounce communion high
 With *spiritual* life—from *human* converse sever !

I pass from clime to clime, from scene to scene,
 And sadness steals upon each farewell hour ;—
 'Tis hard to look with steadfast eye serene
For the last time e'en on a bird or flower ;—
 But never have I gazed on human face,
 And knew 'twould seem a dream upon the morrow,
 [A distant phantom difficult to trace]
 Without a pensive sigh, or tear of sorrow.

Oh ! then, ye sister spirits, fair and kind,
 With merriment and song my sad heart cheering,
 When glides my bark before the southern wind,
 And like a cloud the land is disappearing,
 Believe me I shall feel, alas ! too well,
 This bitter truth—*how painful is all parting !*
 Yet while I breathe my lingering, last farewell,
 And while into mine eyes dim tears are starting—
 'Twill surely something soothe that hour's emotion
 To think this simple lay my name may save,
 When I am wandering far o'er land and ocean,
 Or haply slumbering in the silent grave.

Penang, 1842.

STANZAS.

I.

THOUGH wearily we wait Life's slow dull chime,
 'Twere terrible if God to man should give
 The power to move at will the hand of Time
 O'er the great horologe by which we live !

II.

Impatient heirs—wild lovers—fools untold—
 Would fling away their life with eager gladness,
 Were precious lustrums like a gambler's gold
 All at the mercy of a moment's madness.

III.

But He wills otherwise. At any cost
 Men else would leap long years for prospects fair ;
 Though all would wish some interim were lost,
 God will not curse us with a granted prayer.

ON CARE AND CONDENSATION IN WRITING.

When Apelles was reproached with the paucity of his productions, and the incessant attention with which he re-touched his pieces, he condescended to make no other answer than that he painted for perpetuity.

The Rambler.

Alcestides objecting that Euripides had only in three days composed three verses, whereas himself had written three hundred : Thou tell'st truth (quoth he) ; but here is the difference ; thine shall only be read for three days, whereas mine shall continue three ages.

Webster's Dedication to the Reader of the "White Devil, or Vittoria Corombona."

THERE are some writers who seem to regard mere quickness and facility of production as of more importance than the quality of the thing produced. They insult the public with a flippant boast of the little time which they have thought it necessary to bestow upon a work intended for its acceptance, and make that a subject of triumph which calls for an apology. If the public were in a state of intellectual deprivation, and were too voracious to be nice, these rapid writers might be looked upon as benefactors :—but the case is precisely the reverse ; the world abounds in books, both good and bad. There is at all events no demand for a greater number of the latter kind. We can afford to wait for the result of an author's best exertions, and are not obliged to accept with gratitude the first crude and hurried productions that he is disposed to offer.* It is not the task of a day for a man to enter into competition with such writers as Shakespeare and Milton, or Byron and Wordsworth, or to produce a work of whatever kind, which the world would not willingly let die. A reader is as little curious about the number of hours which a poet may have taken to write his verses, as about the number of arms or legs of his study chair. The question is, whether the verses are good or bad, and not how, when, or where, they were composed. Even the age of a writer is a consideration of very slight importance. His years have no inseparable connection with his works. The latter stand alone in the world's eye, and are judged of by their intrinsic merit, and by this alone must they live or die. There are no works in the language that have been long popular merely on account of the precocity of the author. The peculiar character and condition of a young poet, may excite for a while the generous sympathy of the public mind, and

* I hate all those nonsensical stories about Lope de Vega and his writing a play in a morning before breakfast. He had time enough to do it after.—*Hazlitt.*

direct a friendly attention to his productions, as in the case of Kirke White and Chatterton; but this adventitious popularity can never last. These two unhappy youths have already lost their first bloom of reputation, and we begin to value their productions according to their intrinsic worth alone, which, though far from being inconsiderable, has been greatly over-rated. If their writings had been entirely destitute of genuine merit, the circumstances with which they were connected would not have saved them from an almost instantaneous oblivion. Who now reads Dermody* or Blackett? Southey's friend Jones, the butler, was forgotten in a few months, though his verses were edited by the Laureate, and praised in the *Quarterly Review*. A certain literary cardinal used to boast, that he had written all his works with the same pen. If he had been unable to procure another, the world might have commended his careful preservation of this single instrument of author-craft, and have pitied the unhappy printers who had to compose from an unintelligible manuscript; but as the mechanical difficulty was of his own choosing, we only smile at such an indication of littleness and obliquity of mind. His ingenious saving of quills conferred no interest on his works. He, however, who voluntarily writes against time, and fancies that there is a prodigious merit in declining to avail himself of a few additional hours for consideration and correction, is not a whit less absurd and puerile than was the writer who thus voluntarily confined himself for years to the use of a single quill. Such an uncalled-for economy of pens and time is neither useful nor

* When only ten years of age, Dermody was accustomed to translate a short poem from the Greek or Latin, with the same ease and rapidity, with which a maturer genius would write a familiar private letter. Some of these translations are preserved in the account of his life, but they form no portion of the permanent literature of his country. The effusions of facility and precocity may be a nine days' wonder, but no more. Dermody was like Master Betty, the actor, who was only a surprising boy, and who became an ordinary man. Untimely fruits rarely ripen. Dermody was the son of a respectable schoolmaster, and in his ninth year, was actually in the situation of a teacher of Greek and Latin in his father's establishment. Yet he lived to the age of twenty-seven, and though a prolific writer, left nothing behind him that the world will care to preserve. His earliest productions were his best, but even these have very little intrinsic merit. Men of true genius has been seldom remarkable in their childhood for any manifest superiority of talent. Great intellectual power is usually tardy in its development. There is often a seeming sluggishness or obtuseness in the early years of those gifted persons who subsequently tower above their fellow-men, that deceives or puzzles the judgment of their associates. Rousseau, in his *Emilius*, observes, that nothing is more difficult than to distinguish real dulness in children from that apparent and fallacious stupidity, the forerunner of great abilities. He reminds us that the younger Cato, in his infancy, passed for an idiot. He speaks also of a profound reasoner of his own acquaintance, who at a pretty advanced age appeared to his family and friends to possess a very ordinary capacity. Sheridan, Walter Scott, Byron, and many other men of equal eminence, were by no means brilliant in the school-room.

commendable, but shows "a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it."

Anna Seward had the impudence to talk of translating an Ode of Horace while dressing her hair. If her translations had been worth a straw, we should have been surprised at her facility; but their real value would have received no additional charm from the mode in which they were produced. On the contrary, we should have had reason to be dissatisfied with them, however good, when we came to consider how much better they might have been made, if the author had been less presumptuous and more careful. Her affectation of facility was disrespectful both to Horace and to the public, and her indecent haste or negligence was in direct defiance of the advice of Horace himself. The author of an impromptu may boast with some reason of his quickness, but other writers are not timed like race-horses. If these vain and careless authors wrote with greater elegance and effect than modest and careful ones, we might restrain our indignation at their fopperies; but it is almost idle to observe that true genius is very rarely the accompaniment of self-conceit, and that in all human arts the attainment of excellence is the result of a happy combination of skill and labour. Extreme facility is, generally speaking, an unfavourable indication of the character of an author's mind. Rapid writers, like rapid talkers, are far more frequently shallow than profound. The tongue, says Butler, is like a racehorse, which runs the faster the lesser weight it carries. It is the same with the pen. The veins of golden thought do not lie upon the surface of the mind. The wealthiest men may want ready cash. Some people fall into the egregious mistake of supposing that easy writing must be easy reading. It is quite the contrary. As Pope says,

"True ease in writing comes from art, not chance:
As those move easiest who have learned to dance."*

"The best performances," says Melmoth, "have generally cost the most labour; and that ease which is essential to fine writing, has seldom been attained without repeated and severe corrections. With as much facility as the numbers of Prior seem to have flowed from him, they were the result of much

* "When I was looking on Pope's foul copy of the *Iliad*, and observing how very much it was corrected and interlined, he said, 'I believe you would find, upon examination, that those parts which have been the most corrected read the easiest.'"—*Spence's Anecdotes*.

A Mr. Tupper has published a *Continuation of Christabel*, and has told his readers that it was "*the pleasant labour of but a very few days*." Coleridge wrote the first part in 1797, and the second in 1800, and did not publish them till 1816. See a review of this *Continuation* in *Blackwood's Magazine* for December 1838.

application. A friend of mine, who undertook to transcribe one of the noblest performances of the finest genius that this, or perhaps any age can boast, has often assured me that there is not a single line, as it is published, which stands in conformity with the original manuscript."

Rousseau has remarked, that with whatever faculties a man may be born, the art of writing is of difficult acquisition. Hazlitt was so many years before he could give expression to his thoughts, that he almost despaired of ever succeeding as an author. It is true that he attained great facility before he died. It is thus also with the painter. The quick master-touch is only to be acquired at the expense of long toil and study. A manual dexterity, however, is almost sure to be attained at last, by a painter, after a certain degree of practice; but a corresponding ease and celerity of execution is not always to be acquired by an author, even in a long life of literary labour. Some of the most eloquent writers that ever lived, have produced their earliest and latest works with the same difficulty and toil.

" For e'en by genius excellence is bought
With length of labour, and a life of thought."

It has been very justly observed, that nothing is such an obstacle to the production of excellence as the power of producing what is *pretty good* with ease and rapidity.

Rousseau has described "the ceaseless inquietude" with which he attained the magic and beauty of his style. "His existing manuscripts," says D'Israeli, "display more erasures than Pope's and show his eagerness to set down his first thoughts, and his art to raise them to the impassioned style of his imagination.*" Dr. Johnson has told us of the "blotted manuscripts of Milton," and has shown the painful care and fastidiousness of Pope (to which D'Israeli alludes) by the publication of some of the corrected proofs of the translation of Homer. Swift highly appreciated Pope's art of condensation.

" In Pope I cannot read a line
But with a sigh, I wish it mine,
When he can in one couplet fix
More sense than I could do in six."

Ugo Foscolo, in his elegant Essay on Petrarch, tells us, that if the "manuscripts did not still exist, it would be impossible to imagine or believe the unwearied pains this

* My manuscripts blotted, scratched, interlined, and scarcely legible, attest the trouble they cost me; nor is there one of them but I have been obliged to transcribe four or five times, before it went to press.—*Rousseau's Confessions*.

poet had bestowed on the correction of his verses." "They are curious monuments," he adds, "although they afford little aid in exploring by what secret workings the long and laborious meditation of Petrarch has spread over his poetry all the natural charms of sudden and irresistible inspiration." It is said of the celebrated Bembo, that he had a desk with forty divisions, through which each of his sonnets was passed in due succession, at fixed intervals of time, and that at every change of place it received a fresh revisal.* Joseph Warton, in his Essay on Pope, quotes the assertion of Fenton, that Waller passed the greatest part of a summer in composing a poem of ten stanzas. "So that," adds Fenton, "however he is generally reputed the parent of those *swarms of insect wits, who affect to be thought easy writers*, it is evident that he bestowed much time and care on his poems before he ventured them out of his hands." Warton also mentions, in further illustration of his subject, that it is well known that the writings of Voiture, of Sarassin, and La Fontaine, cost them much pains, and were laboured into that facility for which they are so famous, with repeated alterations and many erasures. Moliere is reported to have passed whole days in fixing upon a proper epithet or rhyme, although his verses have the flow and freedom of conversation. Some of Rochefoucault's maxims received twenty or thirty revisions, and the author eagerly sought the advice of his friends. Buffon called genius *patience*.

It is said that Shakespeare *never blotted a line*. To this we may reply with Ben Jonson, *would that he had blotted a thousand!*† The errors and imperfections that are discoverable even in *his* wondrous pages, are spots on the sun that we often have occasion to wish away. Foreigners constantly throw these defects in the teeth of his national admirers. But Pope, in his Preface to Shakespeare, has shown that the great bard did not always disdain the task of correction, though he sometimes neglected it. The *Merry Wives of*

* Voltaire, in his *Temple of Taste*, says that in the innermost part of the sanctuary he saw a small number of truly great men employed in correcting those faulty passages of their works, which would have passed for beauties in the productions of writers of inferior genius.

† A portion of the passage in which these expressions occur, may be pertinently repeated in this place.—"I remember," says Ben Jonson, "the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, 'Would that he had blotted a thousand,' which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who chose that circumstance to commend their friend, wherein he most faulted; and to justify mine own candour; for I loved the man, and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any."

Windsor and the tragedy of *Hamlet* were almost entirely re-written,

"E'en copious Dryden wanted or forgot,
The last and greatest art—the art to blot."*

Dryden sometimes, however, corrected his pieces very carefully, when he was not writing hurriedly for bread. He spent a fortnight in composing and correcting the Ode on St. Cecilia's day. But what is this, exclaims Dr. Johnson, to the patience and diligence of Boileau, whose *Equivoque*, a poem of only three hundred and forty-six lines, took from his life eleven months to write it, and *three years to revise it*? Ten years elapsed between the first brief sketch of Goldsmith's Traveller and its publication, during which it was nearly re-written two or three times. In his first copy of *The Deserted Village*, the lines were written very wide apart to give room for alterations, and we are told by Bishop Percy, that scarcely a single line of any of Goldsmith's poetical works remained as it was originally written.

The Memoir of Gibbon was composed nine times, and some of Pascal's works were corrected and re-written just as frequently. Addison would stop the press when almost a whole impression of the *Spectator* was worked off, to insert a new preposition or conjunction. Dr. Johnson is said to have corrected and improved every new edition of his *Rambler*. I have read somewhere of a poet, who literally died of vexation, in consequence of discovering an error in one of his verses, just as he was about to present them to his patron. Hazlitt says in his *Plain Speaker*, that he was assured by a parson who had the best means of knowing, that the proof of Burke's *Letter to a noble Lord* ("the most rapid, impetuous, glancing and sportive of all his works") was returned to the printing office so completely blotted over with alterations, that the compositors refused to correct it as it was, distributed the types, and re-set the copy. Ariosto is said to have made many and great alterations in his immortal poem. Aken-side so altered and corrected the "Pleasures of Imagination," and yet so little satisfied his own judgment, that after it had passed through several editions he found it better to re-write it altogether. He did not live to finish the new version, but two or three books or sections of it are now usually included in his works. It is curious to observe his fastidious

* One must be an old practitioner, to understand *striking out*. Schiller was particularly great in that. I once saw him, on the occasion of his "Musenalmanach," reduce a pompous poem of two-and-twenty strophes to seven; and no loss resulted from this terrible operation. On the contrary, those seven strophes contained all the good and effective thoughts of the two-and-twenty.—*Goethe's Conversations with Eckermann*.

alterations. His spirited *Epistle to Curio* was first published in heroic couplets, and afterwards turned into an ode in ten-line stanzas. It is true that these two great changes were by no means improvements, but they prove that Aken-side was not one of those who think labour needless in a man of genius. He urged his principle, however, too far. He delayed the correction of the warm effusions of his youth until old age had chilled his imagination. This was a sad mistake. But whatever may be the disadvantages of over-labour and too great fastidiousness, they are far less dangerous than errors of an opposite character. I believe no one has seriously recommended haste and negligence of composition. The best critics, on the contrary, have urged the necessity of assiduous care. It is remarkable that some of our most voluminous writers have confessed the great toil and attention which they bestowed upon their works. Cowper, a vigorous, and by some thought a careless poet, in one of his delightful letters, observes that "*to touch and re-touch* is, though some writers boast of negligence, and others would be ashamed to show their foul copies, the secret of almost all good writing, especially in verse." He adds, "I am never weary of it myself." Pope, in the first draught of his preface to his poems, had made a similar acknowledgment. "The sense of my faults," said he, "first made me correct: besides that it was as pleasant to me to correct as to write." Moore, whose own poetry, glowing as it is, bears internal evidence of great care, assures us in his life of Byron, that his Lordship was no exception to the general law of nature that imposes labour as the price of perfection. He gives several curious specimens of the noble poet's fastidious changes of phrase, and his laborious correction of defects. Medwin, in his life of Shelley, published in the *Athenæum*, tells us that that poet exercised the severest self-criticism on every thing he wrote, and that his manuscripts, like those of Tasso at Ferrara, were scarcely decypherable. His care, however, I should think, was bestowed more on the choice of striking and gorgeous expressions than on that finish and condensation of style which is now so much neglected. He is too exuberant. Drummond of Hawthornden truly says,

I know that all the Muse's heavenly lays
With toil of spirit are so dearly bought.

In a free translation of Boileau's *Art of Poetry*, partly by Sir Wm. Soame, but chiefly by Dryden, authors are strongly cautioned against too much haste:

Take time for thinking; never work in haste;
And value not yourself for writing fast.

Of labour not afraid :
 A hundred times consider what you' ve said ;
 Polish, ye-polish, every colour lay,
 And sometimes add, but oftener take away.

Horace, who is thought a good authority in such matters, not only advises a poet to keep his work by him for nine years, but particularly insists on the absolute necessity of frequent correction. Beattie confesses in a letter to Sir William Forbes that he thinks it right to let his pieces lie by him for some time, because he was a much more impartial judge of such of his works as he had almost forgotten, than of such as were fresh in his memory. Pope is reported by Richardson, the painter, to have remarked that in Garth's *Dispensary* "there was scarcely one of the alterations, innumerable as they were, in every new edition, that was not for the better." By Thomson's successive corrections in the *Seasons*, Johnson seems to think they lost something of their *raciness*; but Mitford, in his elegant edition of Gray, informs us that he possesses an interlined copy that belonged to Thomson, and which contained corrections in the author's own hand-writing, that were very decided improvements. Pope is said to have suggested some of Thomson's alterations. The epithets in the first edition of the *Seasons* were, it is said, too numerous and often merely expletive.

"Our own times," says Moore, "have witnessed more than one extraordinary intellect, whose depth has not prevented their treasures from lying ever ready within reach. But the records of immortality furnish few such instances; and all we know of the works that she has hitherto marked with her seal, sufficiently authorize the position,—that nothing great and durable has ever been produced with ease, and that labour is the parent of all the lasting wonders of this world, whether in verse or stone, whether of poetry or pyramids." Hogg, the Ettrick shepherd, tells us that even the fluent Scott used often to correct very carefully. The shepherd had seen several of the poet's manuscripts that had numerous corrections and additions on the alternate white page.

When a man feels that he is writing for posterity, and that the propriety of almost every separate thought and expression will be canvassed and criticised throughout succeeding ages, it is no wonder that he should be scrupulous and careful. Those who merely write on some subject of the day, or for newspapers and other ephemeral publications, have neither time nor occasion for such severity of toil; their articles are usually read as hurriedly and as carelessly as they are written.

This is the golden age of periodicals, and though I should be the last to dispute the numerous and great advantages of

this species of publication, I confess that I think it has an injurious effect on some of the higher branches of our literature. The genius that should be devoted to works of permanent importance is now often frittered away in divided and hasty contributions to miscellanies of temporary interest. As rapidity and punctuality are great recommendations in a contributor,—as the scale of remuneration is regulated more by the quantity than the quality of their articles,—and as they are generally published without a genuine signature, and therefore do not involve the reputation of the writer, it is not surprising that terseness, or polish, or condensation of style is never looked for, and rarely met with, in the pages of even the most respectable of our literary periodicals. They exhibit, on the contrary, a vicious redundancy of phraseology, and a reckless disdain of all those gentler or severer charms which have cast such an air of immortality on our best English Classics.

The great majority of our prose fictions are so melo-dramatic and over-wrought, that they have few attractions for a reader of true taste. They indicate, however, the unhealthy condition of the public mind, which requires such coarse and strong excitement that the productions which enchanted it half a century ago are now regarded as tame and spiritless. If such a sweet little cabinet picture as the *Vicar of Wakefield* (so exquisitely finished—so full of character—so thoroughly *English*) were now published, for the first time, it would probably meet with the most contemptuous neglect. Its size alone would be a bar to its popularity. Literature has become a matter of measurement. Every prose fiction is expected to be a work in three volumes, post octavo. The publisher gives an order to one of his literary labourers to send him by a given time a novel of the fashionable size. He knows that if it were to exceed or fall short of the prescribed dimensions, the effect would be quite as fatal to its success as any objection connected with its claims as a literary composition. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, in the first place, that the externals or corporeal part of a novel should be of a particular size and character, and in the next, that its spirit and diction should be wild, startling, and inflated. The public have now so accustomed themselves to a morbid excitement in literature, that they have lost all relish for the quiet simplicity of truth and nature. However, it is quite impossible that this should last much longer. All artificial stimulants are succeeded by a strong re-action, and an indulgence in a taste for the intoxicating ingredients of our present literature, is as bad as a habit of opium-eating. The public will soon become sick of fierce

and gloomy extravaganzas, and discover that they are but ill adapted to improve the taste and judgment. They must ultimately return to simpler and nobler models. It will then be acknowledged as an undeniable truth, that contortions and convulsions are not always indications of spirit and power, and that force and profundity of mind are quite consistent with a chaste propriety of style.

When we revert to the dignity of Milton, and the grace and amenity of Goldsmith, the free and manly vigour of Dryden, and the point and elegance of Pope, the weighty sententiousness of Johnson, and the purity, the refinement and the quiet humour of Addison, we feel how much English literature has suffered by the present popular demand for a species of poetry at once metaphysical and melo-dramatic, and for flashy and turgid essays.

The peculiarities of one class of literature have almost always a direct or indirect effect upon all others of the same period. The rapid, inflated and redundant prose of the present age, corresponds with the similar characteristics of its poetry. It is true that Wordsworth and Coleridge may seem in some respects exceptions, and they have been censured for very opposite faults. But extremes meet. The style of both of these poets is occasionally as diffuse; tumid and gorgeous, as at other times it is simple and bare. No one can be insensible to the real greatness of these writers, (the former unquestionably the first poet of his time,) but they do not so dazzle us with excess of light as to blind us to their defects. They have neglected to concentrate their powers, and have scorned to subject themselves to that severe self-discipline which is so necessary to success in the noble struggle for immortality. Even Campbell and Rogers, though in their earlier works they showed a due respect to the public, and an anxious and judicious regard for their own fame, have lately deserted their classical models, and have fallen into the vices of the new school. The "*Theodric*" of the one, and the "*Italy*" of the other, are equally unworthy of the authors, and are so different from the style of their better days, that had these works been published anonymously, Campbell and Rogers are the two last names with which the public would have connected them. They are verbose and feeble.

Mere rapidity and voluminousness are now commonly mistaken for proofs of the power and fruitfulness of genius. The Dutchman, who considered his brother a great poet because he had written a book as big as a cheese, was not more ludicrously opposed to the true principles of criticism, than

are many of our periodical reviewers.* They pronounce him only a great poet who has produced a bulky volume, and reverse the old saying that a great book is a great evil. It is the small volume of modest and unassuming appearance that is most offensive. When Gray first published his poems, they were so brief, and so few in number, that to give his work the appearance of a volume, he was obliged to swell it out by printing on one side only of the pages. If it had been brought into juxtaposition with the gigantic and bloated quartos of these times, it would have looked more like the ghost of a book than a genuine volume. Were a work of such Lilliputian exterior now published, the author would be laughed at for supposing that it could attract the slightest attention.

As 'tis a greater mystery in the art
Of painting to foreshorten any part
Than draw it out, so 'tis in books the chief
Of all perfections to be plain and brief.

Butler.

In literature, as in every thing else, quality and not quantity is the true test of excellence; and though the remark is a mere truism, it is not the less called for. There may be more wealth in a lady's jewel-box than in a merchant's ware-house, and there is more poetry and thought in five couplets of Pope than in ten cantos of Sir Richard Blackmore. Voluminous and diffuse writers are rarely the favourites of fame. The greater number of those who flourished in former times are now utterly forgotten. Posterity examines unwieldy luggage with a severe and jealous eye, and seems glad of an excuse to toss it into the waves of Lethe. The few voluminous writers, whose works still exist, would have been forgotten also, had they not been as careful as they were copious. What a vast crowd of prolific scribblers have these great and happy men survived! How many thousands have been buried under the weight of their own lumber!

So far from mere voluminousness being the effect of superior power, it is an undoubted truth that every writer of a condensed style could be as diffuse as he pleases, if he were not

* This Dutchman, then, a man of taste,
Holding a cheese that weighed a hundred pound,
Thus, like a burgomaster, spoke with judgment vast—
' No poet like my broder step de ground ;
He be the bestest poet, look !
Dat all de world must please ;
For he heb wite von book,
So big as all dis cheese !'

Peter Pindar.

anxious about the quality of his materials. The converse of this will not hold. 'Blackmore could not have compressed his thoughts like Pope, but Pope had he been willing to degrade and sacrifice his genius, might have been quite as diffuse as Blackmore.

Against much that has been already said it may perhaps be urged that a rich soil is characterized by a speedy and abundant vegetation. I admit it; but this soil must be cultivated with incessant care, or it will soon be covered with a rank luxuriance of weeds and foliage. I do not maintain that quick conceptions are not a sign of genius, but that to connect glorious thoughts with words fit to enshrine and represent them, is a difficulty only to be overcome by assiduous toil and study. It is justly remarked by Shenstone, that fine writing is the result of spontaneous thoughts and laboured composition. Burns has acknowledged, that though his ideas were easy and rapid, the necessary correction of his verses was a heavy task. The great Milton well knew the advantage of condensation, and after dictating about forty lines would reduce them to half that number. It was the custom of Virgil, "to pour out his verses in the morning and pass the day in *retrenching exuberances and correcting inaccuracies*." A French author happily illustrated the comparative facility of a diffuse style, when he apologized for the length of a letter by stating that he had not time to write a shorter one.

SONNET.

OH ! now glad nature bursts upon mine eye !
 The night of care is o'er. Deep rapture thrills
 My waking heart; for life's deforming ills,
 That come like shadows when the storm is nigh
 Foreboding strife, at length have floated by
 And left my spirit free !—The skylark trills
 His matin song; the cloud-resembling hills
 In dim cerulean beauty slumbering lie,
 And form the throne of Peace; the silver stream
 Is sparkling in the sun—its bright waves seem
 Instinct with joy; the verdant breast of earth
 Teems with delight.—The *past* is like a dream,
 A dull trance broken by the voice of mirth,
 Or grey mist scattered by the morning beam !

SONNETS.

BY A BRITISH-INDIAN EXILE TO HIS DISTANT CHILDREN.

I.

My sad heart sickens in this solitude—
 Home is no longer home,—yet eloquent
 Are these lone walls of by-gone merriment—
 The noisy pranks of that small blithesome brood
 That call me *father* ! Memories sad intrude
 Like silent ghosts, where late the air was rent
 With shouts of joy—where merriest hours I spent
 With merriest playmates in their merriest mood !
 Dear human links that bind me to life's oar !
 Sweet stars that pierce the dark cell of my heart !
 Clearer than in a glass, e'en now before
 Mine eyes ye come as when so grieved to part
 I shed the bitter tear :—ah ! Fancy's art
 Transcends the wondrous skill of wizards hoar !

II.

Not mirrored shapes—*realities* ye seem !
 Sweet ones ! at this glad moment I behold
 What never famed Italian painter old
 Hath rivalled or the poet's printed dream—
A living picture ! She whose soft eyes gleam
 With gentle love—~~who~~, coy, but ah, not cold,
 Drops their fair lids when strangers' looks are bold—
 Sits at the side of one whose bliss supreme
 Is all maternal. To that mother's knee
 The youngest girl, half-pleased, half-frightened, flies ;
 For lo ! my cherub boy, with innocent glee,
 Masks his frank features for a gay surprize !
 Loud laughs the second-born :—her charms are three—
 Rose cheeks, and cherry lips, and violet eyes !

III.

I hear the waves upon the sad sea-shore—
 And ah ! my visionary group hath fled !
 To me those dear existences are dead ;
 For distance is a death that all deplore
 Who part as we have parted, never more
 To meet as we have met—alas ! instead
 Each with a sadder heart, a graver head—
 So different, though the same ! Perchance before
 Their cottage white my prattlers are at play !—
 I hear the waves upon the sad sea-shore !
 Those billows roll between us,—who shall say
 They'll bear my treasures back—that they'll restore
 A family to a father, weak and gray,
 Who soon must sleep beneath earth's grassy floor ?

Calcutta, 1834.

STANZAS.

I.

You bid me not repine—
 You'll '*love me evermore*'—
 'Tis this sweet truth of thine
 That makes our parting sore.

II.

If I could but believe
 That fondly trusted heart
 Could change or could deceive
 'Twould pain me less to part.

III.

If I could only deem
 Thine heart so false a thing,
 One tear for a past dream
 Were all the sorrowing.

IV.

But well I know thy worth,
 And what my loss must be,
 There is not on this earth
 So dear a thing to me.

V.

One kiss—one more—the last
 Perchance for many a year!—
 The small hand's pressure's past—
 She's gone—and *I am here!*

VI.

I wake as from a dream,
 And real horrors rise;
 I thought not life could seem
 So dark to human eyes

VII.

The prisoner that can see
 The face he loveth well
 (Though 'tween his bars) may be
 Resigned within his cell.

VIII.

But when malignant fate
 Doth that last solace steal,
 In his so lonely state
 He feels what I now feel

STANZAS.

It was not the magic spark
 From an eye so large and dark,
 Nor the forehead high and fair,
 Nor the long rich flakes of hair,
 Like the floating clouds that grace
 The sweet moon's out-brightening face—
 Nor the mouth whose flexile bow
 With each movement, swift or slow,
 Deadlier than the Boy-God's art,
 Sends an arrow to the heart—
 Nor the small hand, ear, and foot
 That high blood and old impute—
 Nor the manner, nobly bred—
 Nor the well-set, stately head,
 Bending, rising, like a flower
 When the breeze just stirs the bower—
 Nor the shoulder's sheet of snow—
 Nor the little hills below—
 Nor the round chin, chiselled fine—
 Nor the smooth cheek's flowing line—
 Nor the curves the painter loves
 When the worshipped model moves—
 Oh not one of these nor all
 That have made so many fall
 Prostrate on the earth before thee,
 Caused *my* spirit to adore thee !

Lady, 'twas a spell refined
 Woven by the heart and mind ;
 Else perchance had I withstood
 Witcheries of flesh and blood ;
 But to heighten every grace
 And etherialize the face,
 Making the bright form more bright,
 Like a vase alive with light,
 All my raptured soul to win,
 Came a glory from within.

Wisdom, genius, wit and worth,
 Sage-like thinking, child-like mirth,
 Taste unerring, skill thine own,
 Painting's touch, and music's tone,
 Meekness in thine happiest mood,
 In affliction fortitude,
 Firmness ne'er devoid of ruth,
 Generous tenderness and truth,

And each nameless lesser charm
 That can't worldly cares disarm,
 That to Woman God hath given
 To make this else dull earth a heaven,—
 These, sweet lady, these are thine—
 A moral galaxy divine !

LINES TO A LADY

WHO PRESENTED THE AUTHOR WITH SOME ENGLISH
 FRUITS AND FLOWERS.

GREEN herbs and gushing spring in some hot waste
 Though grateful to the traveller's sight and taste,
 Seem far less fair and fresh than fruits and flowers
 That breathe, in foreign lands, of English bowers.
 Thy gracious gift, dear lady, well recalls
 Sweet scenes of home,—the white cot's trellised walls—
 The trim red garden path—the rustic seat—
 The jasmine-covered arbour, fit retreat
 For hearts that love repose. Each spot displays
 Some long remembered charm. In sweet amaze
 I feel as one who from a weary dream
 Of exile wakes, and sees the morning beam
 Illume the glorious clouds, of every hue,
 That float o'er fields his happy childhood knew.

How small a spark may kindle fancy's flame,
 And light up all the past ! The very same
 Glad sounds and sights that charmed my heart of old
 Arrest me now—I hear them and behold.
 Ah ! yonder is the happy circle seated
 Within the favourite bower ! I am greeted
 With joyous shouts ; my rosy boys have heard
 A father's voice—their little hearts are stirred
 With eager hope of some new toy or treat,
 And on they rush with never-resting feet !
 * * * * *

Gone is the sweet illusion—like a scene
 Formed by the western vapours, when between
 The dusky earth and day's departing light
 The curtain falls of India's sudden night.

ON LITERARY MEN.

MR. THACKERAY has been accused of "*Flunkeyism*" in his caricatures of literary men in the *History of Pendennis*. His enemies say that he has prostrated himself before the altars of Rank and Fashion, and offered up to those earthly deities the acceptable sacrifice of genius. We think Mr. Thackeray fairly open to the charge of having done a gross injustice to his own class, but we will not believe for a single moment that he is guilty of having done so from unworthy motives. He was carried away, we think, by the spirit of caricature. A writer, like Mr. Thackeray, accustomed to aim at lively effects, is often betrayed very unconsciously into one-sided representations and false extremes. We do not deny that there is a certain degree of truth (though it is far too highly colored) in some of his delineations of the literary class, and if he had given us the pleasant side of the picture, as well as the disagreeable, we should have had little reason to complain. But there is no profession in which there are not members that are a disgrace to it, and nothing can be more unjust than to select these black sheep as the representatives of the whole flock. This is the sin of which Mr. Thackeray, in his eagerness to produce a striking picture, has unquestionably been guilty. He represents the whole literary class as contemptible. In his account of a publisher's dinner, he makes the literary guests without exception egregiously silly. One of his *dramatis personæ* is made to say to the other—"Now that you have seen the men of letters, tell me, was I far wrong in saying that there are thousands of people in this town who do not write books, who are to the full as clever and intellectual as people that do." As many of our most distinguished and highly gifted authors are in the habit of attending these publisher's dinners, nothing but an inveterate tendency to wholesale caricature could have led a man of Mr. Thackeray's discernment to give the public to understand as the moral of such an entertainment, that men of letters have no well-founded claim to intellectual superiority. This is the impression which his picture leaves upon the reader's mind.

If wit so much from ignorance undergo
Ah! let not learning too commence its foe.

It is a sad thing to find a man like Mr. Thackeray giving such an account of authors as one would far more naturally expect from a shallow and vulgar man of the world. He errs as much from his over-eagerness to be smart as a dull fellow

would have done from sheer incapacity. When a certain coxcomb was asked what he thought of Hazlitt, he said he saw *nothing particular in him*. That such a fellow should see nothing particular in a highly gifted man is not surprising, but that so quick and capable an observer as Mr. Thackeray should see "nothing" in men whose writings have instructed and delighted the world, is indeed remarkable—if it be really the case. But we cannot believe it. Mr. Thackeray has long been a contributor to magazines, and the ambition of all magazine writers is to produce a startling picture, and it matters not much to their pay-masters which point of view they take so long as the effect is powerful and surprising: novelty and not truth is the great attraction.

It is easy to say that there are many far more "clever and intellectual people" in society than Wordsworth and Byron—but it is perhaps not quite so easy to prove it. What Wordsworth and Byron *could do they did do*. A book is a very unequivocal test of a man's intellectual power. But there are many men who shine in conversation, whose mental endowments are of an inferior order. The brilliant converser, who has charmed the hearer in the social circle, would often seem a very common-place personage if his words were taken down by an accurate short-hand reporter and submitted to the cooler judgment of the reader. Withdraw the advantages of tone and manner and place and circumstance, and the spell is broken. To the ordinary hearer, the conversation of the lively man of the world or the shallow pretender to literature, who has just enough ability to hide his want of more, may appear very superior to that of the man of genius; but we believe there never yet was a man of real genius whose greatness, even in conversation, was wholly invisible to a kindred spirit. Generally speaking, the conversation of men of literary genius, when they are perfectly at their ease in the society of those whom they can trust and love, is charming from its freshness and enthusiasm. It is often too peculiarly delightful from its clearness and precision. The practice of composition accustoms a man to arrange his ideas, and to clothe in words those thoughts and feelings to which men in general despair of giving utterance. An evening's intercourse with a company of first-rate men of letters is not unfrequently the most exquisite of all intellectual entertainments. Hazlitt, in one of his Essays, we forget which, tells us that after a man of intelligence and taste and feeling has been accustomed to

Such celestial colloquy sublime,

the conversation of mere men of the world becomes intolerably weary, stale, flat and unprofitable. It is not that

men of genius always talk more smoothly and fluently and brilliantly than other men ; but that what they *do* say has an unmistakeable fervour and character in it. Their talk is never parrot-talk. It comes at once from their own hearts and minds. Even if what they say has been said a thousand times before, it is still original and fresh, because though not new, it is home-felt and unborrowed. The difference between their talk and that of mere men of the world is the difference between that of *Hamlet* and that of *Polonius*. The former's reflections may have occurred before to other minds ; but they are never echoed from them. They are thoroughly his own. *Polonius* has many wise sayings, but no wise thoughts. He is a mere cuckoo. Any old woman might have caught up the same familiar saws and axioms, and have applied them quite as happily. A man of genius gives us the true utterance of his own spirit. We do not mean to say or insinuate that less gifted men are either fools or hypocrites ; far from it ; but they often fancy that they are thinking when they are only uttering the thoughts of others and not pouring out their own souls. Their minds are not seldom perfectly passive while their lips are active. Every acute observer has had experience of the truth of this remark. It is impossible to pass from company to company of ordinary people and not to recognize a vast number of sentiments and sayings that are common property, learnt by rote and repeated without reflection. But a familiar remark sometimes falls from the tongue of a man of genius with a depth of tone that tells us at once it comes direct from the innermost part of his nature. Into a few simple expressions, that are meaningless from others, he sometimes puts a world of thought and feeling. He who has had the good fortune to become acquainted personally with men of genius, if he be capable of recognizing the traits of intellectual greatness, will acknowledge that he has never met one of these gifted beings who did not unconsciously betray in his earnest conversation the divinity of his nature. Not only in their words do men of genius exhibit what is in them, but in their looks and gestures. There is invariably something characteristic in their manners, if well observed ; and whatever may happen to be the defects of the other features of his face, a man of genius has almost always a speaking eye. It is the window of his soul, and it is sure to flash with the internal light in moments of excitement.*

* Walter Scott said that the eyes of Burns were the finest he ever saw in a human head. Leigh Hunt tells us that he never saw eyes that looked so inspired or

Mr. Thackeray would say perhaps that he was not speaking of true genius but of mere pretenders. But he appears to make all literary men pretenders. Why was he not more careful to draw the line of distinction? He speaks contemptuously of a whole class, and that his own, which includes some of the finest intellects of his country. His representations are sweepingly condemnatory. He leaves his readers to conclude that it is a vulgar error to suppose men of literary eminence at all superior to men in general. He thinks, we suppose, with Gray, that there may be "mute inglorious Miltons" and with Wordsworth that "many are the poets who have never penned their inspiration." It may be so: at all events we cannot prove the contrary. All that we can say is that we are somewhat sceptical on this point. Genius is a plant that shoots up spontaneously in any soil. It requires no hot-house cultivation. Genius so naturally yearns to develop itself, that we can hardly imagine any circumstances that would entirely suppress it. Eighteen men of eminence out of every twenty have struggled into notice through a thousand obstacles. Though genius is a rare and precious flower, it is as difficult to destroy as a common weed.

Mr. Thackeray in a letter to the newspapers has replied to the charge of lowering the dignity of literature. But his defence is by no means a satisfactory one. It is pretty clear that he has not merely represented a single literary personage or clique in an unfavourable point of view, but has made the most miserable pretenders to literature the representatives of the whole literary class. He has done this without any qualification or contrast, and, therefore, he has no right to shelter himself under the excuse that *a painter of human life is not bound to select favourable specimens exclusively*. No writer complains that Shakespeare has given some of the deepest shadows of human nature, because he has also given the lights, and it is clear that he never intends to deceive us into an erroneous estimate of the character of classes by unfavourable individual specimens. The best proof of his noble impartiality is the fact that to this day no one can prove from his works alone the nature of his personal predilections. His many-sided mind reflected humanity in every phase. His

supernatural as those of Wordsworth. Coleridge had fine large dreamy eyes:—"The noticeable man with large grey eyes." Pope, deformed as he was in other respects, had an expressive countenance, and used often to be complimented on his eyes and once indirectly complimented himself. He is said to have been very conscious of their beauty.

Such Ovid's nose—and, Sir, *you have an eye—*
Go on obliging creatures!

sympathies were universal, and he had no more difficulty in making allowances for accidental and natural defects in others than if they had been his own. But his generosity was not mawkish. It never interfered with the clearest insight into evil. His kind-heartedness was not likely to blunt his penetration into character, as was the case with Charles Lamb, who, with a partiality and gentleness almost feminine, shrunk from the discovery of a taint of evil in his associates. Lamb could think and speak of "the light-hearted Janus of the *London Magazine*," in terms which it is now painful to recall, and could recognize something rich and Shakesperian in the forced and dull humour of an author of the name of Wight, because he loved the man. Shakespeare loved his fellow-men as well as Charles Lamb, and a great deal better, because his affections and his views included an infinitely wider sphere. He loved mankind too much to care exclusively for individual men, or particular classes, so that we have all of us fair play in *his* pages ; and this is the case in the works of every truly great writer. Profound thinkers "look abroad into universality."

Fielding—still the greatest of novelists—has not characterized and condemned whole classes under individual portraits, and though Walter Scott had his partialities and weaknesses as a man, he no sooner took the pencil of pictorial fiction in his hand than the noble instinct of true genius made him both generous and just to all human nature.

The one-sidedness and injustice in Mr. Thackeray's representation of the literary class we are equally grieved and surprized to discover in the works of a person of his ability ; but we cannot believe that it is natural to him. There is in the light literature of these times an unwholesome yearning to be *smart*. Light periodical literature now circulates a good deal amongst the shallow coxcombs of high life. These must be propitiated, and they are not fond of grave and earnest writing. The publishers press upon the contributors the necessity of being spirited and piquant. This leads many writers to assume a tone of levity and sarcasm quite contrary to their original bias. Simple and quiet nature is not the fashion. Mr. Thackeray is a writer for the periodicals, and that single fact is perhaps a better excuse for him than any that he urges for himself. When a writer offers the editor of a magazine a plain tale, he is sure to be told that if he expects it to be inserted, he must spice it. The public, he is informed, now require their food to be highly and elaborately cooked and garnished. Every article must be wrought into something striking. The consequence is that in every corps of contributors, there are but too many Forcible-Feebles.

Nothing can be more wearisome to a sober taste than the false glitter and straining after effect that characterize the periodical literature of the time. There is a considerable number, however, of superior writers who live by their labours in the periodicals; but who cannot afford to indulge a taste for sobriety and truth when these qualities are at a discount in the literary market. It is only genius of the very highest order, supported too by already acquired fame, that can stem the tide of popular taste without ruin to itself. Mr. Thackeray, clever and fine natured as he is, has been carried away by the current, and sometimes writes as if he thought it more necessary to be lively than just. He knows of what sort of stuff magazine readers are made. They are not thinkers. Those classes which in former times luxuriated in Minerva Press novels and Della Cruscan poetry, now read the numerous *Monthly Magazines*, which in these days are better fitted for the taste of such people than they were some twenty years ago when they had pretensions of a somewhat higher order. The *London Magazine* at that time was enriched with the thoughtful humour of Elia—in that periodical too and the *New Monthly* were the vigorous and brilliant essays of Hazlitt and the fine humanities of Hunt. The pages of the last mentioned magazine sparkled with the genuine wit and gaiety of the two Smiths, and were adorned with the classical criticism and polished verse of the gifted editor, Thomas Campbell, under whom, said one of his best contributors, it was a grace to write.

But those days are gone; and instead of thought, wit, criticism and philosophy, we have prose fictions suited to the time—regular magazine articles “made to order.”

Mr. Thackeray is not the first or only author who has spoken disparagingly of his own class. Men of far higher name and power have been guilty of the same fault. Every one has heard of Voltaire's disgust at Congreve for wishing to pass for a private gentleman when the famous Frenchman called upon him in England and meant it as a literary compliment. It is melancholy to think that such men as Scott and Byron could be guilty of the same mistaken pride. Take away their literary fame and genius, and of what especial importance were those two men to the world at large? Scott was an honest-hearted plain-spoken man, and it is difficult to believe that his contempt for literary distinction was affected; but there is not the same difficulty in the case of Byron. He condescended to all sorts of absurd artifices for the sake of producing an effect, and making the world stare and wonder. He liked people to express their astonishment that he was prouder of being a good shot or a good swimmer than a good poet. Scott, with all his genius,

had a strong leaning towards rank and wealth and station. It is quite possible that he looked upon the frivolous George IV. and the Duke of Buccleugh and other men "illustrious by courtesy" as of incomparably more importance to the world than the author of the Waverley Novels. If he could have questioned posterity, he would have learned a different lesson, and perhaps have lost something of his humility in his intercourse with "*the great*."

"I need hardly repeat," says Lockhart, "what has been already distinctly stated more than once, that Scott *never considered any amount of literary distinction as entitled to be spoken of in the same breath with mastery in the higher departments of practical life—least of all with a first-rate captain.*" It must have been satisfactory to Scott, if this was really his creed, to know "that mastery in the higher departments of practical life," if of so much more importance than genius in literature, is also less rare! There are at least fifty great captains for every two or three great poets. Miltons and Shakespeares are by no means so plentiful as first-rate captains, military and naval. England has never been without them in the time of need. "*I know not,*" says Sir William Temple, "*whether of all the numbers of mankind that live within the compass of a thousand years, for one man that is born capable of making such a poet as Homer or Virgil, there may not be a thousand born capable of making as great generals of armies or ministers of state as any of the most renowned in story.*"

It is strange that such a man as Scott, knowing so well the permanent power, the dignity, and universality of literature, should so miserably under-rate its comparative importance. We could easily excuse the stupid mistake of a mechanic, who should imagine that he does more real good to his race when he makes shoes for a whole village than could be effected by the poetry of a hundred Miltons or Wordsworths; but it is equally marvellous and provoking to find a great author speaking contemptuously of literature because its utility is less palpable within a narrow sphere than many of those arts and sciences and trades which are more immediate, but more limited in their effects.

It is a sad thing to see first-rate men ashamed of their profession. Scott, perhaps, thought with John Kemble that the man who is at the head of his profession is above it. Literary men owe him a grudge for giving so much consolation to the dunces.

It is fortunate for literature that other authors of eminence have been proud to stand by their craft and have maintained its dignity.

"Such a superiority," says Hume, "have the pursuits of literature over all others, that even he who attains but a mediocrity in them, merits praise above those who most excel in the common and vulgar professions." Generally speaking, literary men are not disposed to side with the opinions avowed by Scott and Byron respecting the rank which literature is entitled to hold in the estimation of mankind, for men of intellect themselves usually appreciate the inestimable value of the higher forms of thought, and its mighty and eternal operation on man's nature. Byron, though a man of powerful poetical genius, was not particularly distinguished as a thinker. His intellect was rather vigorous than subtle. He was not much of a philosopher or a logician; and like Scott, he was a slave to many of those conventional influences which truly great men have generally thrown aside. He loved literary fame, as much as any man, but as he was never for a moment unconscious of his rank as a nobleman, he shrunk from being regarded as a member of the literary fraternity. He would not walk through Coventry with them. "I do not draw well with literary men," he said. And why not? Partly because he never forgot that he was a Lord, and partly because he was himself a poor conventionalist, compared with the generality of literary men, and a still worse reasoner. "Great Lords," said Dr. Johnson, "don't like to have their mouths stopp'd," and if we are to believe Leigh Hunt and Hazlitt, both capital talkers themselves, it was an easy matter to obtain a triumph over Byron in

The jar of argument, the clash of words.

Mr. Thackeray has been singularly unfortunate in his literary associates if he refers to his own experience, when he makes one of his characters in the novel of *Pendennis* observe, that "*it may be whispered to those uninstructed people who are anxious to make the acquaintance of men of letters that there is no race of people who talk about books, or, perhaps, who read books as little as literary men.*" This is so glaringly false, that it is hardly worthy of a refutation. The conversation of literary men in general may not be all that it ought to be, but it is full of thought, of life, and earnestness, and is less technical and professional than the talk of any other class; for literature includes subjects of universal interest. If Mr. Thackeray had spent his evenings with Carlyle and Hunt, Hazlitt and Talfourd, and Charles Lamb and Coleridge, and Mackintosh and Macaulay, he would hardly have had the conscience to speak so contemptuously of the conversation of literary men.

It has been observed, that there is too often a tone of

persiflage in Mr. Thackeray's pages, and that "nothing so tyrannizes over one as the habit of jesting and contempt, real or assumed." We may add, that nothing is so easy as to gain a sort of reputation for smartness and ability with idle, shallow, or malignant readers. A flippant irreverence and an air of contempt towards men and things in general esteem, gives a very stupid fellow a station of importance in vulgar eyes. The dullest scribbler in the world can scatter about heaps of offensive epithets or indulge in a quiet sneer. This sort of writing requires no expenditure of thought, no toil or ingenuity, no knowledge of politics, literature or philosophy, no humour, no sagacity. It is natural that malignant dullards should assume a style so tempting from its facility, but it is extremely to be deplored that it should ever be adopted by such an author as Mr. Thackeray.

There are few men who would not be ashamed to speak with open contempt of literature itself;—unhappily the number is equally small of those people who are ready to concede to men of letters their true position in society, or to reward them according to the value of their labours. When the court of Charles I. rang with the recitation of Butler's witty couplets, neither the king nor his courtiers underrated *Hudibras*, though they allowed the author of it to starve. Works of genius are sufficiently praised and valued even when the workmen themselves are treated with contempt. The fine gentlemen who loll on easy couches and enjoy the literary cates with which they are periodically supplied, care no more for the author himself than for the cow which supplies them with their morning's milk. If he were a lord, indeed, the case might be different. An author, with no position in society, is of all odd animals the most contemptible in the eyes of men of fashion. If by force of reputation he gets into their circle, however they may tolerate him as far as outward civility goes, they say in their heart of hearts, "*This man is not one of us.*" A Beau Brummell, or a sprig of nobility, in certain circles, is worth a hundred authors. The fashionable and titled triflers do not dispute the fact that the announcement of a new history by Macaulay is of more importance to mankind than the announcement of a new ball at Almacks: they only feel that it is of less importance to themselves individually. On the introduction of a man of letters into their sphere, they are willing perhaps to give him credit for genius and learning. These are things they do not envy. Their first question is not about the number or quality of his productions, but *who is he?*

"To whom related or by whom begot?"

They judge of men as they judge of horses, *by their sires*.
This is in England,

In Calcutta it is not heraldry or genealogy, the purse or the coat that makes a man, but *place*—rank in office. The literary man has here even less influence than in England. One of the East India Company's *writers* has a prouder position in society than any one of the world's *writers*.

HOME-VISIONS.

WRITTEN IN INDIA.

I.

THE skies are blue as summer seas—the plains are green and bright—

The groves are fair as Eden's bowers—the streams are liquid light—

The sun-rise bursts upon the scene, like glory on the soul,
And richly round the couch of Day the twilight curtains roll.

II.

But oh ! though beautiful it be, I yearn to leave the land,—
It glows not with the holier hues that tinge my native strand,
Where shadows of departed dreams still float o'er hill and grove,
And mirrored in the wanderer's heart, immortalize its love !

III.

I gaze upon the stranger's face—I tread on foreign ground,
And almost deem Enchantment's wand hath raised up all around :—

My spirit may not mingle yet with scenes so wild and strange,
And keeps in scorn of fleshly bonds its old accustomed range.

IV.

In that sweet hour when Fancy's spell inebriates the brain,
And breathing forms to phantoms turn, and lost friends live again,

Oh ! what a dear delirious joy unlocks the source of tears,
While like unprisoned birds we seek the haunts of happier years.

SONNET.

TO A FRIEND IN LOVE.

BELIEVE me, dearest friend, 'twere nobler far
 To scorn the prize for which thy soul hath yearned,
 Than tamely feed a passion proudly spurned
 By one whom thou hast worshipped as a star.
 Oh ! live not thus eternally at war
 With loftier hopes ! Before thy young veins burned
 With love's sweet poison, who like thee discerned
 The glad earth's glory, or so laughed at care ?
 Arrest then quickly this delirious fever,
 Nor breathe again an unavailing sigh ;
 Forget a cold, disdainful heart for ever ;
 Seek the green meadows and the mountains high
 And crystal rivers. Feast thine amorous eye
 On Nature's charms, for she repulseth never.

SONNET—MORNING.

WHEN to my fevered brain, the long drear night
 No balm hath brought, and restless and alone
 I've paced the silent fields, till glittering bright
 O'er the green orient mount the fresh day shone ;
 How have I joyed to mark yon hoary Tower
 Unfolding slowly, 'neath the morning beams,
 His misty mantle grey !—In such an hour,
 To Contemplation's eye glad Nature seems
 Most holy,—and the troubled heart is still.—
 The vocal grove, the sky-reflecting lake,
 The cheerful plain, and softly-shadowed hill,
 To loftier dreams are ministrant, and wake
 Unutterable love for this fair Earth,
 And silent bliss, more exquisite than mirth

EVENING SOUNDS.

Now slowly sails the gray mist o'er the plain,
 The busy "hum of men" is heard afar,
 Blent with the murmurs of the restless main
 Whose tremulous bosom glimmers with the star
 Meek Evening wears beneath her dusky veil.
 And hark ! the nightingale's melodious lay !
 Borne on the wandering wind o'er hill and dale,
 The soft notes rise, and fall, and fade away !

THE RETURN FROM EXILE.

I.

As memory pictured happier hours, home-sickness seized my
heart,
I never thought of English land but burning tears would
start;
The faces of familiar friends would haunt me in my sleep,
I clasped their thrilling hands in mine—then woke again to
weep!

II.

At last my spirit's fevered dreams so wrought upon my
frame,
That life itself uncertain seemed as some worn taper's flame,
'Till o'er the wide blue waters borne, from regions strange and
far,
I saw dear Albion's bright cliffs gleam beneath the morning
star!

III.

That radiant sight redeemed the past, and stirred with trans-
port wild,
I paced the swift bark's bounding deck, light-hearted as a
child;
And when among my native fields I wandered in the sun,
I felt as if my morn of life had only just begun.

IV.

The shining golden butter-cup—the daisy's silver crest—
The living gems of every hue on Nature's verdant breast—
Of English birds the cheerful songs that rose from English
trees—
From blossomed hedge the fragrance fresh that came on every
breeze—

V.

The white cot peeping from the grove, its blue smoke in the
sky—
The rural group of ruddy boys, that gaily loitered nigh—
The silent sheep-besprinkled hill—the rivulet-watered vale—
The lonely lake, where brightly shone the fisher's sun-lit
sail;—

VI.

Awhile these seemed illusions brief of beauty and delight,
A dear but transitory dream—a mockery of the night!
For often in my slumbering hours on India's sultry strand,
In visions, scarce less palpable, I hailed my native land.

VII.

But when upon my wildering doubts reflection flashed the truth,
Oh ! never in my childhood years, nor in my fervid youth,
So deep a rapture thrilled my breast as while I gazed around
And recognized the thousand charms that hallow English ground !

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MOODS OF MIND.

I.

A SUDDEN gloom came o'er me ;
A gathering throng of fears
Enshrouded all before me,
And through the mist of tears
I saw the coming years.

II.

'Tis strange how transient sorrow
Can mortal sight delude ;
To-day is dark—to-morrow
Shall no dull shade intrude
To tinge a brighter mood.

III.

I heard the low winds sighing,
Above the cheerless earth,
And deemed the hope of dying
Was all that life was worth,
And scoffed at human mirth.

IV.

From that wild dream awaking,
And through the clouds of care
A mental sunshine breaking,
I marvelled how despair
Could haunt a world so fair.

LOVE-STANZAS.

I.

THEY tell me health's transparent flower glows freshly on
 thy cheek,
 They say that in the festal hall thy looks of rapture speak ;
 They know that boundless love is mine, but do not read my
 heart,
 And little dream their friendly words awake an inward smart.

II.

I well might weep to learn that care had blanched thy lovely
 brow,
 And yet thine happier fate calls forth no grateful gladness
 now ;
 I judge from this sad jealous breast, and deem if thou wert
 true,
 Thou could'st not feel a moment's mirth, nor wear that rosy
 hue.

III.

I should not thus forget, dear girl, that early years are bright,
 That hearts so young and pure as thine, are touched with
 holy light,
 And like the fountain's crystal streams, that through spring
 meadows run,
 Reflect alone the fairest things that kindle in the sun.

IV.

They tell me too, that 'mid the crowd thou hast a smile
 for all,
 That oft upon the lowliest ear thy kindest accents fall :
 And oh ! I doubly mourn my fate, and breathe an envious
 sigh,
 To think the stranger hears that voice, and meets that
 radiant eye !

V.

And yet 'tis selfish thus to grieve—'tis base to doubt thy
 truth,
 Those looks and tones of tenderness beseech thy gentle youth,
 And if thy soul of virtue's charms displays a bounteous store,
 Thou need'st not, sweet one, love the less, though I must
 love the more !

VI.

In fancy's trance I kiss thy brow, and clasp thee to my
 breast,—
 But ah ! how soon that dream departs, like sun-light in the
 west !
 And then my path is dark as their's who wander through the
 night
 When suddenly the fitful winds have quenched a cheering
 light.

VII.

And yet not wholly comfortless is home's deserted cell,
 For there thy written words remain of faithful love to tell ;
 And these are symbols of the soul that life's fond records
 save,
 E'en when the hand that traced the lines is mouldering
 in the grave.

VIII.

And still around my neck is hung, that last dear gift of
 thine,
 So like a fairy talisman—a spell almost divine !
 I hold it in my trembling hand—I touch thy braided hair !
 I do but press the secret spring—and see thy features fair !

SONNET—WRITTEN IN INDIA.

THE scene is sweetly changed ! The lord of day
 No longer wears the countenance of pride
 That seared the green earth's breast ! A veil doth hide
 The lustre of his brow ; his parting ray,
 As some fond lover's smile that melts away
 Through farewell tears, is fading tenderly ;
 And bright clouds, like rich banners in the sky
 Dimmed by the distance, soften into grey.
 Now, like a shadowy form whose beauty steals
 O'er the rapt soul in visionary hours,
 Meek Twilight comes ! From zephyr-haunted bowers
 Out ring the tuneful shama's evening peals,
 Blent with the stream's low murmur, village songs,
 And the pastoral pipe's sweet notes that echo's voice prolongs.

POETRY AND UTILITARIANISM.

Prejudice apart, the game of pushpin is of equal value with the arts of music and poetry. If the game of pushpin furnish more pleasure, it is more valuable than either. Every body can play at pushpin; poetry and music are relished only by a few. The game of pushpin is always innocent; it would be well if the same could always be asserted of poetry. Indeed between poetry and truth there is a natural opposition; false morals; fictitious nature. The poet always stands in need of something false.—*Bentham*.

Touchstone.—Truly I would the gods had made thee poetical.

Audrey.—I do not know what poetical is: Is it honest in deed and word? Is it a true thing?—*As You Like It*.

It is lamentable when philosophers are enemies to poetry.—*Voltaire*.

The coincidence of Mr. Bentham's school with the ancient Epicureans in the disregard of the pleasures of taste and of the arts dependent on imagination, is a proof both of the inevitable adherence of much of the popular sense of the words *interest* and *pleasure*, to the same words in their philosophical acceptation, and of the pernicious influence of narrowing "*utility*" to mere visible and tangible objects to the exclusion of those which form the larger part of human enjoyments.—*Sir James Mackintosh*.

Do they (the utilitarians) not abuse Poetry, Painting and Music?—*Hazlitt*.

It is very wrong to represent it (Philosophy) to youth as a thing inaccessible and with such a frowning, grim, and terrible aspect. *Who is it that has put this pale and hideous mask upon it?*—*Montaigne*.

BENTHAM has asserted that "there is a natural opposition between poetry and truth." The case is the reverse. Truth is the soul of poetry. As well might it be said that there is a natural opposition between a portrait and the living model. Poetry, like painting, is an imitative art. The range of poetry, however, is far more extensive than that of painting. Poetry is not conversant with external forms alone, but with the mind of man. Fiction is but one of the means by which the poet conveys his truths. Poetry is the image of nature; fiction is the glass of which the poet's mirror is composed. The reflection of an object in a mirror is not the less *true*, because a child might touch the glass with his hand, and prove that the image of a thing is not the thing itself. Are the landscapes of Claude to be condemned as colored falsehoods, because they are full of cattle and human figures and trees and flowers that never actually existed but in the painter's mind or on his canvass? These are the fictions of painting, and they are analogous to the fictions of a still higher art. Such particular fictions are the vehicles of general truth. Is Shakespeare '*opposed to truth*' in his representations of human nature? The first aim of his works—their chief merit is their *truth*, and it is their success in this respect that has won for Shakespeare the almost idolatrous admiration of the world. The poet's truths, however, are not like those technical truths or matters of fact that are demanded in a court of justice. Shakespeare was not on his oath when he told us of the murder of *Desdemona*. He was not in the

witness-box. If Shakespeare had put one of his scenes on canvass instead of into a book, perhaps the utilitarians would have been less severe upon the painter than they have been upon the poet, and yet where is the difference? The tragedy of *Othello* is a picture in words instead of colours.*

It is difficult to understand how any man of ordinary acuteness should so confound the most positive distinctions, as to identify the mere externals and accompaniments of poetry with its spirit. It is a trusim, that metre and fiction are not the constituent parts of poetry. There may be these without poetry, and poetry without these. It appears to be necessary, however, to repeat so simple a fact for the enlightenment even of philosophers!

Every worldly-minded economist, who has just a sufficient glimmering of sense to enable him to fix his eye on the main chance, to feel the importance of wealth, to load his own purse, and to "lock his rascal counters from his friends," may shield himself under the authority of the utilitarians, and chuckle at the ridicule of that unprosperous and unproductive race of men, the poets.

There is something very like a sarcasm in Bentham's remarks in his *Rationale of Rewards*, that it is not necessary to assist poets by factitious rewards, because they take such a pleasure in their own art, and sometimes acquire a sudden reputation! It is true that poets are capable of experiencing an exquisite pleasure unknown to common minds, but this peculiar enjoyment being of a purely intellectual character, cannot of course render them wholly independent of the pressure of life's daily cares. And yet how much is lost to the cold despisers of works of imagination, even with all the advantages of worldly prosperity!

"Unknown to them when sensual pleasures cloy
To fill the languid pause with finer joy."

It has become a deadly heresy to speak reverently of such men as Shakespeare and Milton. Jeremy Bentham and Mr. Mill are the new idols.† The former writers, it is said, only amused mankind with melodious falsehoods; the latter have instructed them with useful truths! These modern

* "We were not aware till the other day, that Mr. Bentham had really evinced his want of universality to so puerile an extent; but we find the words in Mr. Richardson's *Literary Leaves*, with a good many more, refuting themselves at every step. And he thinks poetry contradictory to 'truth!' This specimen of an amazing ignorance of the very essence of things, of the spiritual wants of mankind, and of the whole world of ideal beauty, is happily followed up by Mr. Richardson, among other quotations by the two following:" (those from Voltaire and Sir James Mackintosh).—*Leigh Hunt's Monthly Repository*.

† This article was written in the life-time of these authors.

sages would make man a mere automaton. Every thing like intensity of feeling or a refined enthusiasm is regarded by the new school of philosophy as an evidence of morbid irritability and an unsound judgment : it is treated as a disease of the mind. The poet is considered a romantic trifler, and his art an ingenious jugglery. It is the aim of the new sect to raise an eternal barrier between poetry and philosophy. They speak of the first as an illusion, and of the second as "the only true thing." If the Muse is represented as a false and frivolous coquet, philosophy, as they have portrayed her, is a coarse and sensual being, who can scarcely see a yard before her. Her eyes are bent upon the ground, and her whole soul is absorbed in paltry calculations. She is a selfish and narrow-minded economist. If poetry present her with her fairest products, her first and only question is, how much they will sell for, and to what account they can be turned. She is a petty retail-dealer in the meanest wares, with whom

The value of a thing
Is just so much as it will bring.

This disgusting and degrading spirit has seized for a while upon the public mind ; but it cannot possibly continue, unless the very substance of our human nature could be decomposed by the chemistry of utilitarianism. While there is beauty in the universe, and it is acknowledged to be the production of a beneficent Power, who gives us nothing that is useless, Poetry, who bathes herself in the light and loveliness of nature, will never wholly cease to enchant and refine the heart of man.

It is useless to talk of music to the deaf or of colour to the blind ; and it is perhaps equally idle to argue with the opponents of the *art divine* ; for they are confessedly deficient in that sense of beauty to which poetry is addressed, and which has only been bestowed upon the favourites of nature. To cold and vulgar minds how large a portion of this beautiful world is a dreary blank ! They recognize nothing but an uninteresting monotony in the daily aspect of the earth or sky. It is the spirit of poetry which keeps the world fresh and young. To a poetical eye every morning's sun seems to look rejoicingly on a new creation. Poetry widens the sphere of our purest and most permanent enjoyments. It makes the familiar new, the past present, the distant near. It is the philosopher's stone discovered ; it transmutes every thing into gold. "It accommodates," says Lord Bacon, "the shows of things to the desires of the mind." Not that it throws on objects a false appearance, but that it puts them in the happiest point of view, just as we place a picture or a statue at

its proper distance or elevation, that all petty details and slight roughnesses and imperfections may be lost in the general effect, which is thereby rendered more complete and true. It strikes off all petty excrescences ; it disdains all local prejudices, temporary topics, and mere conventionalisms, and goes at once to the heart of those universal questions which interest mankind as human beings.

It has been objected to poetry that it has not always been employed on the side of truth and virtue. But an art is not answerable for its artists, nor a science for its professors. There are men who from some strange obliquity of mind are apt to apply the noblest instruments to the worst of purposes. It is gross injustice to denounce poetry as profane and false, because a few of the base and insincere have used its external form for their own wretched ends. He who can pierce beneath the surface is aware that impurity and meanness are inconsistent with the nature of poetry in its highest sense. A forced connection has sometimes been effected between poetry and immorality, but they do not actually amalgamate. Those critics, however, who are so dull of apprehension as to hold fiction and metre to be constituent parts of poetry, and to confound the meanest passages of grovelling prose in verse with those immortal lines which glow with inspiration, must be pitied and forgiven if they see no distinction between the empyrean spirit of poetry itself and the grosser matter with which it may be brought into conjunction. Their error is indeed a melancholy one, but they cannot help it. It is rather their misfortune than their fault. There is an affinity between the purest virtue and those sublime emotions with which the highest poetry is conversant. Our very communion with God, and all our thoughts of another world, are poetical in proportion as they are elevated. The pages of the Bible glow with the finest poetry ; its holiest parables are poems. Dr. Isaac Watts, whose piety and virtue are beyond suspicion, expresses his surprise that "the profanation and abasement of so divine an art as poetry, should have tempted some weaker Christians to imagine that poetry and vice are naturally akin ; or at least, that verse is only fit to recommend trifles and entertain our looser hours." "It is strange," he adds, "that persons who have the Bible in their hands should be led away by thoughtless prejudices to so wild and rash an opinion. He describes poetry as "an art whose sweet insinuations might almost convey piety into resisting nature and melt the hardest souls to virtue." Well might Milton tell us of "*what religious, what glorious and magnificent use might be made of poetry both in divine and human things.*" His own *Paradise Lost* is a noble illustration of the

power and purity and majesty of his favourite art. Archbishop Sharp advised all young divines to unite the reading of Shakespeare to the study of the Scriptures, and John Wesley, the celebrated methodist, recommended his young disciples to add to the study of the Bible the perusal of the *Fairy Queen* of Spenser.

Poets who have made use of their divine endowment in the cause of vice are like philosophers who have employed their reasoning powers to throw a veil over the face of truth. Both act in opposition to the still small voice of conscience ; both are equally sensible that their noble gifts are shamefully misused ; but neither poetry nor philosophy change their original nature whatever may be the sins of individuals. Has not Religion itself been sometimes turned to a bad account ? In this our imperfect state, the greatest good is easily converted into the greatest evil. We must be content with the preponderance of desirable results. If we are to close the volume of our poetical literature because it is sometimes sullied, we must do the same with our prose.

"Poetry," says Lord Bacon, "is taken in two senses, or with respect to words and matter. The first is but a character of style and a certain form of speech not relating to the subject ; for a true narration may be delivered in verse and a feigned one in prose—but the second is a capital part of learning, and no other than feigned history." Poetry is indeed history—the history of all time ; of man, not of men ; and its fiction or feigning is only a form of truth. The philosophers who would deem this remark a paradox are like those very unpromising little children, who, because they have never heard the talk of wolves and lions, conclude that Gay's fables are nothing but wicked falsehoods. Fiction, however false in respect to particular facts, can only charm us by its general truth. It signifies little whether *Othello* and *Iago* ever lived and died ; it is enough to know that the passions represented in those characters still burn and breathe in the human heart. Aristotle justly pronounced poetry "a more philosophical thing than history," (so called) "for poetry is chiefly conversant with general truth ; history with particular." If literature is of value to the world, the poets demand no inconsiderable share of our gratitude and applause. When we look back to the writers of Greece and Rome, it is impossible to deny that poetry forms by far the most precious portion of their legacy to mankind. The ancient poets sin less frequently than the ancient historians against the cause of truth. We know that the pictures of general nature by the greatest poets of antiquity are exactly to the life, and even their representations of national and

temporary manners have the strongest internal evidence in their favour. But the ancient historians with more importunate calls upon our faith are much less trusted. They relate with gravity, and as if they were on oath, particular facts too ridiculous to deceive the children of the nineteenth century. Even modern historians so mix up truth and falsehood, that it is sometimes impossible to distinguish the one from the other. Dr. Johnson said of Robertson's histories, that they were mere romances; and every one knows that Hume's enchanting narrative can rarely be relied on when his prejudices are concerned. Sir Walter Raleigh, when he was writing the *History of the World*, discovered that even they who aim honestly at the collection of particular facts must often despair of obtaining an exact knowledge of even those details which seem most within their reach. He heard the noise of a violent contention under his window, whence he could neither see nor hear distinctly. Of one person after another, as each entered his apartment, he made inquiries concerning the disturbance, but so inconsistent were the several accounts, that he was unable to trace the truth. "What," said he, "can I not make myself master of an incident that happened an hour ago under my own window, and shall I imagine I can truly understand the history of Hannibal or Cæsar?" There is not this difficulty with respect to the poet's truths. The human heart lies bare before him.

There has been a great deal of vulgar and shallow objection to poetry on the score of its supposed inutility. Because it cannot do every thing, it has been thought that it can do nothing. Poetry, indeed, does not teach a man how to make a fortune or to feed a starving family. Neither does morality nor religion. In a narrow sense of the word, Cocker's *Arithmetic* is more *useful* than Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or the Bible itself. If man's life were merely animal—if he had no spiritual existence, the objection to poetry would be well founded. The butcher and the baker would be more useful than the poet and the philosopher. But as we have a soul to feed as well as a body, the case is widely different. Our happiness depends more upon spirit than on matter. Poetry cannot cure the grief of a bodily wound; but it can administer to a mind diseased, and it can heighten our truest pleasures. "Poetry," says Coleridge, "has been to me its own exceeding great reward. It has soothed my afflictions; it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments; it has endeared solitude; and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the good and the beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me." It is not poets only who have experienced the

useful influence of the Muse. The greatest statesmen and even the most celebrated warriors have felt her power. Alexander the Great carried the works of Homer about with him in a silver box, and used to place them under his pillow at night. On the evening before the battle of Quebec, General Wolfe listened with intense delight to the recitation of Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*. "I would rather," exclaimed the hero, "have been the author of that piece than beat the French to-morrow!" He preferred the glory of a poet to that of a conqueror. He was not the worse soldier, however, because he loved the Muse; nor were Fox and Burke less efficient statesmen because they venerated the poet's art.

It is gratifying to find that the most powerful organ of the utilitarians, the *Westminster Review*, has latterly adopted a far more liberal tone respecting works of imagination than characterized its earlier numbers. Though Jeremy Bentham, under some strange misconception of its real character, has asserted that poetry is "naturally opposed to truth;" his disciples do not now uphold him in this unhappy error. A *Westminster Reviewer* acknowledges that "'song is but the eloquence of truth'—the truth of our inmost souls—the truth of humanity's essence, brought up from those abysses which exist in every bosom, and just moulded into metre without being concealed or disfigured by the workmanship. Poetry is an essence distilled from the fine arts and liberal sciences—nectar for the gods. It tasks the senses, the fancy, the feelings, and the intellect, and employs the best powers of all in one rich ministry of pleasure. It must be by a rare felicity that the requisite qualities for its production are found in a man; and when they are, we should make much of him—he is a treasure to the world." "So far," says the same reviewer, "from there being any natural incongruity between the reasoning and imaginative faculties, as duncees have always delighted to believe, it may rather be affirmed that they have a natural affinity, and rarely attain their full development but when they exist in union."

Poetry improves us by a direct appeal to the finest sensibilities of our nature. It extends our sympathies, and purifies our thoughts. The true lover of the Muses cannot be mean and base without a perpetual struggle against his better nature. It is the part of poetry to lift us above petty cares and sensual desires, and to make us feel that there is something nobler and more permanent than the ordinary pleasures of the world. It is a species of religion. Poets are nature's priests. They lead us "from nature up to nature's God." They "vindicate the ways of God to man."

'They breathe a soul into the dry bones of moral science, and invest them with an ethereal beauty. They teach us to

"Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

The precepts of the prose-writer do not enter the hearts of youthful readers like the living examples on the poet's page. No lecture on guilty ambition leaves so vivid and permanent an impression on the mind as the agony of *Macbeth*. There is scarcely a moral axiom in prose that has not been inculcated in verse with infinitely greater force. The sentiment, which meets with cold approbation in the page of the prose moralist, is sent alive into the deepest recesses of the soul by the poet's magic. The effect is at once electrical and lasting.

Nothing can more effectually beguile men from the circle of mean and selfish thoughts than an art which enriches the mind with lovely images, and warms the bosom with generous sentiments. "This I have observed," says Feltham, "to the honor of poets,—I never found them covetous or scrapingly base. The Jews had no two such kings in their catalogue as Solomon and his father: poets both. There is a largeness in their souls beyond the narrowness of other men; and why may we not then think this may embrace more of heaven and of God?"

With respect to the education of the young, though poetry should never be neglected in colleges or schools, we need not endeavour to make every student a poet. This is not the object—poets indeed are not to be *made*; but we may cultivate in young minds that fine sense of the true and the beautiful to which poetry administers.

That system of education is essentially defective which is addressed exclusively to the understanding through the medium of science. Science *by itself* is hard and cold. Its influence is ungenial unless accompanied by the study of those glorious arts, which through the imagination stir the feelings. The heart is at least of as much importance as the head. We should neglect neither. If science may teach us to number and measure the stars of heaven, let poetry teach us to feel their mysterious beauty. He who has clothed the visible universe in light and loveliness, could never desire us to be insensible to its glory or to confine our notice of it to measurement and calculation. Let poets therefore instruct the youthful and ingenuous student how to appreciate the beauty which God has lavished upon the creation. He who is so taught has within his reach those sources of pure and serene delight that are wholly inexhaustible. When he quits the struggling crowd and shakes off the cares of life,

"The meanest floweret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale;
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening Paradise."

There is no doubt, that the attention of the reading public was for some years too exclusively directed towards works of imagination, and poets are now suffering from the force of the reaction. There seem to be fashions in literature, as in every thing else ; and each branch of literature and science has its turn of popularity. The public taste is now as violently mechanical and utilitarian as a few years ago it was poetical and imaginative. There was a great rage for poetry of a certain kind in the time of Pope ; but the flock of mocking birds, who had got his tune by heart, without catching a single gleam of his inspiration, soon wearied and disgusted the public ear.

After Collins, Young, and Thompson (all genuine poets), there was a long night with scarcely a single luminary in the poetical horizon. Cowper indeed was "a bright particular star," and would have shone conspicuous even in a galaxy of glories ; but an age that esteemed Hayley a great poet did not deserve to possess a Cowper. It was the previous dearth of true genius that occasioned the present generation of poets such a hearty and reverential welcome, and it is owing to their numbers and to their intellectual affluence, that the craving for true poetry has been so speedily and entirely satisfied. It is doubtful whether any poetical production from the most popular poet of the day, would now obtain a decent offer from the publishers. Moore would not get another two thousand pounds for a poem of the length and character of his *Lalla Rookh*, and Scott and Byron would have discovered, had they lived a little longer, that the poetry which was once quite as saleable as the actual necessities of life, is now in the estimation of the multitude an unvalued toy. There are always a certain number of the lovers and readers of poetry (a fit audience though few), who remain faithful in their attachment to the Muses, through evil and through good report, and whom a thousand Mills and Bentham's could not drive from the green slopes of Parnassus. There are warm-hearted and fine-minded truants, over whom these harsh school-masters have very slight authority. But even the lovers of poetry, though still enchanted with that holiest and divinest of all human arts, have got tired of their once favourite artists, and turning from the pages of Scott and Moore and Byron, have concentrated all their affections upon Wordsworth, who, though he may long remain the poet's poet, will perhaps never become widely popular. The high reputation of Wordsworth as a poet has been forced upon the public by the critics ; but though his name is now familiar even to the mob of readers, his writings have not found the way into their hearts.

The word *utility* is one of the rocks on which *utilitarians*

have been wrecked. It is admitted, that nothing is *useful*, but as it contributes more or less to the happiness of mankind. The utilitarians seem to maintain that happiness consists in sensual enjoyments—in eating and drinking—in good clothes and comfortable houses. They encourage therefore only that sort of *useful* education which enables people to *get on in the world*. The poets do not deny the value of these things, in their way; but maintain that we have something in our nature that is superior to our mere animal impulses, and that is more worthy of our care. To this it is rejoined, that before we can exert our spiritual faculties, we must possess the necessaries of life. We must live before we can think. Therefore it is of more consequence to live than to think, and those articles that support life are more useful than poetry. It may be urged that this is a caricature of the utilitarians, and it is not asserted that their entire system of philosophy is compressed into this rapid statement; but as far as the opposition between poetry and utilitarianism is concerned, the case is not unfairly stated. There is nothing objectionable in their celebrated doctrine respecting the “greatest happiness of the greatest number.” The utilitarians have argued on this point with acuteness and sagacity, and in a truly philanthropic spirit. It is against their attacks on poetry and the fine arts that a stand should be made.

If the word *utility* has been used with no definite meaning, that of *poetry* has been still more vaguely understood. Many decently educated people can discover no difference between the rhymester and the poet, and when they hear poetry spoken of as one of the loftiest exertions of the human intellect, they are very apt to cast up their eyes in wonder. They confound the *mechanism* of poetry with the *spirit*.* But if poetry be so mean a thing as to consist in the mere jingling of rhymes, how is it that there are so few genuine poets, and so many pretenders; and that the notion has so long prevailed, that *Poeta nascitur, non fit*? It is generally admitted that no care or labour will make a poet, though mere industry and a good capacity may secure success in any other art or profession. Genius of the highest and rarest order is essential to the true poet.

Bentham says, that poetry is a mere amusement. “*Prejudice apart*,” says he, “*the game of pushpin is of equal value with the art of poetry*.” He even adds an implication that it

* Coleridge has rightly explained that *poetry* is not the proper antithesis to *prose*, but to *science*.

is of superior value, for pushpin gives pleasure to a greater number of persons, and is more innocent. "Every body can play at pushpin ; poetry is relished only by a few." Poetry is classed by Bentham, under the general head of "the arts and sciences of amusement," with ornamental gardening, and "amusements of *all sorts*." The utility of poetry and other "amusements," as far as *pleasure only* is concerned, is liberally enough admitted, with the pleasant addition (to soothe the irritated idolators of Homer, Shakespeare and Milton), that they are "excellent substitutes for drunkenness, slander and the love of gaming!"*

In his introduction to the translation of Aristotle's works, Mr. Taylor expresses his particular regret at the loss of the second and third books of the Treatise on Poetry; "because," says he, "there can be no doubt of Aristotle's having treated in one of those books of the *purification of the mind from depraved affections, and of the correction of the manners, as the principal and proper end, according to the ancients, of right poetical imitation*." He adds, however, that "there is still extant a most admirable account of the different species of poetry by Proclus, the Coryphæus, next to Plato and Aristotle, of all true philosophers." In the translation of this work of Proclus, there is the following passage:—"For of poetry one kind has the highest subsistence, is full of divine good, and establishes the soul in all the *causes of things*." Plato, according to Proclus, banished poetry from his commonwealth, not from any disrespect to the art itself, but from an apprehension that *young* people might misunderstand it (as Bentham did even in his old age), and fail to make a distinction between what is allegorical and what is not. Plato is said to have very "properly preferred poetry in its loftiest character to every other human art."† "He evidently testifies that human affairs become more perfect and splendid when they are delivered from a divine mouth, and that *true erudition* is produced in the auditors of such poetry." "The

* The despisers of poetry have generally shown that they did not understand it. The fault was in themselves. Mr. Locke has spoken almost as contemptuously of poetry as Jeremy Bentham has done. Mr. Molyneux, in a letter to Locke, expressed his opinion that all our poets (except Milton) were mere ballad-makers, compared with Sir Richard Blackmore. "There is," replied Locke, "as I with pleasure find, a strange harmony throughout between your thoughts and mine." Of the man who could think that Shakespeare and Spenser were mere ballad-makers, compared with Blackmore, we may fairly say, that he was utterly ignorant of the nature of poetry, and therefore quite unfit to judge of its utility or of its rank as an art.

† Certainly poets that write thus, Plato never means to banish. His own practice shows that he excluded not all. He was content to hear Antimachus recite his poem, when all the herd had fled him; and he himself wrote both tragedies and other pieces.—*Feltham's Resolves*.

Muse," says Socrates, "makes men divine; and from these men thus inspired, others catching the sacred power, form a chain of divine enthusiasts."

But let us see what are the opinions of some of the most eminent English writers on the same subject. The epithet *divine* is constantly applied to this art, not only by the ancients, but by the most profound philosophers amongst the moderns. Lord Bacon has said, that poetry has something *divine* in it; * that "it serveth and conferreth to magnanimity, morality, and delectation." Sir William Temple has written an Essay on poetry, in which he observes "that it proceeds from a celestial fire, or, divine inspiration." He maintains that "the great honour and request, wherein it has always been held, have not proceeded only from the *pleasure* and *delight*, but likewise from the *usefulness* and *profit* of poetical writings." "The chief end of Dramatic poetry," he says, in another place, "seems to have been *instruction* under the guise of fables." He has given, as it were by anticipation, a pleasant hit at the utilitarians—"I know very well, that many, who pretend to be wise by the forms of being grave, are apt to despise both poetry and music as toys and trifles too light for the use or entertainment of serious men. But whoever find themselves wholly insensible to these charms would, I think, do well to keep their own counsel, for fear of reproaching their own temper, and bringing the goodness of their nature, if not of their understanding, into question." "I am apt to believe," says the same writer, "so much of the true genius of poetry, that I know not whether of all the numbers of mankind that live within the compass of a thousand years, for one man that is born capable of making such a poet as Homer or Virgil, there may not be a thousand born capable of making as great generals of armies, or ministers of state, as any the most renowned in story.

What does even that stern satirist, the Dean of St. Patrick, say of poetry?

"Not empire to the rising sun
By valour, conduct, fortune won;
Not greatest wisdom in debates,
Or framing laws for ruling states,
Such heavenly influence require
As how to strike the Muse's lyre."

Let me cite a beautiful passage from Sir Philip Sidney:—

"The poet doth, as if your journey should be through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes, that full of that taste you may long to pass further. He beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the

* Bacon was not thinking of the mechanical part of poetry—mere metre. There is nothing divine in the art of measuring syllables. Aristotle did not mean that a versifier was a more useful writer than an historian.

margin with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness ; but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportions, either accompanied with, or prepared for the well enchanting skill of music—and with a tale, forsooth ; he cometh unto you with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner.”——“ Even those hard-hearted, evil men, who think virtue a school name, and despise the austere admonitions of the philosopher, and feel not the inward reason they stand upon, yet will be contented to be delighted ; which is all the good fellow poet seems to promise ; and so *steal to see the form of goodness ; which seen they cannot but love, ere themselves be aware, as if they took a medicine of cherries.*”

This reminds me of the celebrated simile in the beginning of the *Jerusalem Delivered* (imitated from Lucretius.)

“Thou knowest the world with eager transport throng
Where sweet Parnassus breathes the tuneful song ;
That truth can oft, in pleasing strains conveyed,
Allure the fancy, and the mind persuade :
Thus the sick infant's taste disguised to meet
We tinge the vessel's brim with juices sweet ;
The bitter draught his willing lip receives ;
He drinks deceived, and so deceived he lives.”

Hoole's Tasso.

“I think,” says the learned Feltham, “that a grave poem is the deepest kind of writing.” “The study of poetry,” it is remarked by Burke, “is the study of human nature ; and as this is the first object of philosophy, poetry will always rank first amongst human compositions.” Dr. Johnson observes, that poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth by calling in imagination to the help of reason. He makes Imlac, in the tale of *Rasselas*, relate, that “wherever he went he found that poetry was esteemed as the *highest learning*, and regarded with a veneration somewhat approaching to that which man would pay to the Angelic nature.”

Cowley has warmly said, that “there is not so great a lie to be found in any poet as the vulgar conceit of men, that lying is essential to good poetry.” Poetry has been finely described as

“Truth severe in fairy fiction dressed.”

Godwin in his “Thoughts on Man,” speaks of the immortality of the poet, whose works are always fresh, in contrast with the fate of the natural and experimental philosopher. “New discoveries and experiments come, and his individual terms and phrases and theories perish.” “This,” he continues, “is strongly calculated to repress the arrogance of the men of science, and the *supercilious contempt they are apt to express for those who are engrossed by the pursuits of imagination and taste.*” The reason of the poet's immortality and his independence of all changing fashions and opinions is, that his element is the human heart ; and until man's internal nature is changed, a truly great poet, such as Shakespeare for example, will continue to maintain his empire, while the language in which he writes exists.

Rapin asserts that "the great end of poetry is to *instruct*, which is performed by making pleasure the vehicle of that instruction." "It was said of Euripides," says Dr. Johnson, "that every word was a precept; and it may be said of Shakespeare, that from his works might be collected a *system of civil and economical prudence*."

How easy it would be to multiply to almost any extent these quotations in support of the opinion, that poetry is not a childish trifle, fitted exclusively for mere amusement; that it is not naturally opposed to truth either physical or moral, and that it is something better than a game at pushpin, and intended for a higher purpose than that of passing away an idle hour or saving us from "drunkenness and slander!"

Some writers have endeavoured to show that Bentham could not, consistently with his system, avoid classing poetry under the same head with pushpin and "*other sorts of amusements that are good substitutes for drunkenness and slander*." "Nobody," say they, "finds fault with the naturalist who includes men and monkeys in the same order of being." This looks plausible; but it is mere sophistry. If there were the same connection between poetry and pushpin that there is between man and the monkey, the justification might be admitted. A monkey is perhaps in the same scale of being as a man, though man is at the top of the scale. But there is no kind of relation between poetry and pushpin. Philosophy and pushpin are just as much connected. What would the disciples of Bentham say to any one who should couple in the same manner utilitarianism and pushpin?

It has been urged, as something like a triumphant answer to the present charge against Bentham of an unjust depreciation of works of imagination, that he was himself very fond both of poetry and music in his hours of relaxation from severer studies. But what does this prove? Did he not entertain himself in the same way with cards and dancing, and "*other sorts of amusement*?" If he had really pierced beyond the externals of poetry, he would have treated it in his deliberate writings with greater reverence, and not have spoken with an almost-blasphemous contempt of an art which has been described as "*divine*" by some of the greatest intellects that this world has known. Do those who speak of poetry in the style of Bentham understand what is meant by the epithet *divine*, applied to no other works save those of the imagination, the most godlike faculty we possess? It will be long, I suspect, before men of mind will transfer their idolatry of poetical genius to such an author as Bentham. He may be esteemed and honoured by many as an able and

philosophical writer, but it would sound strange even to utilitarian ears to speak of him in those enthusiastic terms which the critics apply to Shakespeare. "The world of spirits and nature," (says Augustus Schlegel,) "have laid their treasures at his feet; in strength a demi-god, in profundity of view a prophet, in all-seeing wisdom a protecting spirit of a higher order, he lowers himself to mortals as if unconscious of his superiority, and is as open and unassuming as a child." "The magnitude of his genius," says Thomas Campbell, "puts it beyond all private opinion to set defined limits to the admiration which is due to it." "Shakespeare was a poet whom nature made," says Sherlock, "and then *broke the mould*." "I restrain my expressions of admiration," says Morgan, "lest they should not seem applicable to mortal man." "He has been universally idolized," exclaims Sir Walter Scott, "and when I come to his honoured name I am like the rich man who hung up his crutches at the shrine, and was obliged to confess that he did not walk better than before. It is indeed difficult to compare him to any other individual. The only one to whom I can compare him, is the wonderful Arabian Dervise, *who dived into the body of each, and in that way became familiar with the thoughts and secrets of their hearts.*"

It is strange that any one should express a doubt as to the *moral result* of the productions of this wondrous poet, whose knowledge of the human heart was of so extraordinary a nature, that men look upon his capacity as something supernatural. There is scarcely any person of polite education, in our own country at least, who does not owe something to his mighty genius. He is a teacher of the manliest and the gentlest virtues. His wisdom has diffused itself through the whole body of English literature, and has become as familiar to his countrymen as household words. He who has a thorough knowledge of Shakespeare's works, and is really able to appreciate their moral and intellectual beauty, must be no ordinary man. The divine spirit and miraculous intelligence of the poet must mingle with and elevate his thoughts, amidst the crowd and hum of men and in the majestic solitudes of nature.

"Homer," says Bentham, "was the first of poets: where shall we place him among the moralists?" The answer to this is, that Homer was probably the greatest moralist of his own age. He taught mankind the virtues of generosity, bravery, temperance, magnanimity, fortitude, tenderness and friendship. Pope notices the opinion of Longinus, that Homer was remarkable for the grandeur and excellence of his sentiments. He also alludes to the "innumerable in

stances" which Dupont, in his *Gnomologia Homerica*, has given of a resemblance between the sentiments of Homer and those of the Scriptures.

"Poetry," observes the *Edinburgh Review* in a very able and interesting article on the life and writings of Dr. Currie, "does more for man than wine has ever been said to do. It is the best and noblest of drams. It brightens his countenance and makes glad his heart. It gives him wings and lifts him out of the dirt; and leads him into green valleys; and carries him up to high places, and shows him at his feet the earth and its glories. The man read Homer as Homer ought to be read, who said that every body looked to him a foot higher." The poets of the Bible have always been esteemed good moralists, even by those who do not believe the Scriptures to be the word of God. "The best security," says Campbell, "that we possess, for the probability of the poet's talents being employed in the support of virtue, is in the nature of poetry itself. Impurity is an anomalous mixture in its character."

As the painter or sculptor naturally selects the loveliest objects in external nature, so, I think, is the poet naturally led to dwell on the finest traits of our moral being. That individual poets or painters have taken an opposite course, only proves the obliquities of their particular tastes, and ought not to be brought against the character of their arts. Are all writers in *prose* immaculate? To suppose that an art so divine as that of poetry, so associated with the deepest feelings and the loftiest thoughts—an art of which the spirit infuses itself into our converse with the Creator and the universe, is confined in its results to mere *pleasure*, and that pleasure bearing an affinity to the amusement derived from a game at pushpin, is an absurdity that could only be excused in a drunkard or a fool. When a philosopher talks in this way, he deserves no mercy.

Who will dispute the morality of Milton, the main purpose of whose grand and glorious Epic is to "justify the ways of God to man?" Genuine poetry is, generally speaking, not only essentially true, but essentially moral. It is not to be denied that some poets, forgetful of their high calling, have abused their powers, and have compelled the Muse to enter upon an evil bye-path, and to link her native glory with vile and uncongenial associations. In this case the poet, and not his art, should be the subject of reprehension. But, as Dr. Channing has observed, true poetry cannot long be divorced from what is good and pure; and the writings of the most immoral poets exhibit the struggles of the ethereal spirit of poetry to escape from its unnatural connection with sensual images or mental degradation. The immoral parts are generally

mere prose in verse, while the more poetical passages consist of those appeals to our best affections, those descriptions of the loveliness of external nature, or those glimpses of a state too glorious for complete revelation to mortal eyes, in which poetry delights and in which it most readily proves its power over the human heart. It is therefore no argument against poetry, that the art has been misapplied by the artist.* Painting might be depreciated with equal justice, by holding up to contempt the vulgarities of the sign-painter or the caricaturist, and omitting all reference to the higher and holier imagination of a Raphaëlle. We should judge of an art not by its meanest exhibitions, but by its greatest triumphs ; as we estimate the strength of the eagle, not by its lowest, but by its loftiest flight. It is difficult to conceive any thing more truly unphilosophical than Bentham's notions on this particular subject.

A school-boy would hardly be guilty of so gross an error as that into which Bentham falls, when he identifies the external with the inner character of poetry, the letter with the spirit. The one may be mere falsehood, while the other is the divinest truth. Bentham must have confounded in his own mind the meanest verse with the sublimest poetry, before he could have brought himself to speak with flippant contempt of an art by which Homer, Shakespeare and Milton have made themselves immortal. These are spirits of which men of intellect are proud to show their admiration. To profess a deep and ardent sense of their genius is to prefer a claim to the possession of superior taste and judgment. But it will be said, that all poets are not equally worthy of admiration. This is a palpable trusim. But if there are many bad poets, are there not as many bad philosophers ? If there are mean writers in verse, are there not mean writers in prose ? Neither verse nor prose are to be condemned, merely because they are applied by wicked or ignorant writers to evil or foolish purposes. The faults of the poet are not the faults of his art.

It is truly wonderful that any individual who has ever thought at all upon the human mind, and has witnessed the irrepressible enthusiasm with which men of taste in all ages have hailed the appearance of poetic genius, should yet regard it with an ignorant contempt. Such a man as Bentham

* Do not the enemies of a Free Press justify their opposition to that mighty blessing much in the same way as the utilitarians justify their opposition to poetry ? Both are admirable instruments of good, that are liable to be turned to evil purposes.

could not fail to have observed the intense emotion often excited by the poet ; and it is strange that he should have been aware of this prodigious power, and yet not have felt inclined to inquire into the cause. The fascination is not to be attributed to false morals and tinkling rhymes. What must he have thought of those persons who with a reputation for genius and judgment, have pronounced poetry to be the highest of all human arts ? What must he have thought of Wordsworth who though no idiot said that poetry is "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge ?"

Matter-of-fact people conceive poetry to be opposed to truth because it is chiefly conversant with that order of things and thoughts which is beyond the range of their own minds. Whenever they attempt to be poetical themselves, they invariably do violence to nature and common sense. If they attempt to paint human passion, they are merely bombastic. Nothing can be more false and extravagant than the verses of a literal-minded man.

Even men whose minds are elegant and refined, if they have not poetical genius, though they may be good judges of the compositions of other men, are unable themselves to paint the passions of the human heart or the beauties of external nature with spirit and fidelity. In the most voluminous collections of verse by men of mere cleverness, in the midst of much that is ingenious, we seek in vain for a single poetical idea. Persons of talent or learning without genius, with all their labour and assiduity, produce nothing in verse worthy of preservation, and are never poetical even by accident. In five thousand of their verses there are not five lines of poetry. When we meet with the shortest fragment of true poetry, we allow the praise of genius to the writer.

Myriads of men have attempted to excel in this divine art, but how few have succeeded ! How many able and well-educated persons have devoted their whole lives to it in vain, who would infallibly have excelled in almost any other study with the same talents and assiduity. Hayley, for example, a learned and clever writer, spent half a century in an unrequited courtship of the Muse. The "Admirable Crichton," who excelled in every other accomplishment, attempted poetry, and failed.

If *verse* be *poetry*, there is scarcely a respectable family in England that has not its poet. Almost every well-educated man has at some period of his life committed the sin of rhyme. Nothing is so easy or so common. But *poetry* is an "art unteachable, untaught." One line that is breathed upon by the Muse is a hallowed thing.

The only way to account for Bentham's error, is to suppose that it originated in his own want of imagination, and in

as great a mistake as to the nature of that faculty as he fell into with respect to poetry. We meet with many persons of ordinary knowledge and education, who laugh to scorn the pretensions of the poet as an instructor of mankind, and who are quite unable to understand that imagination is not only conversant with truth, but that no high truth is to be discovered without it. We look not, however, for such ignorance and obtuseness in a philosopher. Many metaphysicians have made poetry their text book, and the most subtle and profound truths are often flashed upon our understanding by poetical illustrations.* It is a sad mistake to suppose that imagination is always in direct opposition to reason. All truly great thinkers and discoverers have been indebted to the former faculty. In no one department of Literature or Science have men become eminent who have not possessed a large share of imagination. It is almost another word for genius; at all events there may be much talent, but no true genius without it.† It is imagination which suggests materials for the reason and judgment, or places them in that strong and vivid light which enables us to see them with distinctness.

The great mob of mankind are not easily persuaded that abstract studies can possess even an indirect practical utility, and look upon a poet as a visionary idler.‡ Imaginative men are continually exposed to the insults and misapprehensions of the vulgar, who only see what is immediately before them. Their notion of the utility of poetry is like Falstaff's notion of honour. They ask if it can set a broken leg or cure the grief of a wound, and on receiving an answer in the

* A philosopher will admit some of those wonderful lines or words (in poetry) which bring to light the infinite varieties of character, the furious bursts or wily workings of passion, the winding approaches of temptation, the slippery path to depravity, the beauty of tenderness, the grandeur of what is awful or holy in man. In every such quotation, the moral philosopher uses *the best materials for his science; for what are they but the results of experiment and observation on the human heart, performed by artists of other skill and power than his? They are facts which could only have been ascertained by Homer, by Dante, by Shakespeare, by Cervantes, by Milton!* Every strong feeling which these masters have excited, is a successful repetition of the original experiment, and a continually growing evidence of the greatness of their discoveries.—*Progress of Ethical Philosophy.*

† It was the habit of association, which forms a principal part of the complex faculty of the imagination, that may be said to have led to various discoveries in science, and to have furnished Bacon with his luminous illustrations in philosophy.—*Edinburgh Review.*

‡ By those who are accustomed to speak of poetry as light reading, Milton's eminence in this sphere may be considered as only giving him a rank amongst the contributors to public amusement. Not so thought Milton. Of all God's gifts of intellect, he esteemed poetical genius the most transcendent. He esteemed it in himself as a kind of inspiration, and wrote his great works with something of the dignity of a prophet. I agree with Milton in his estimate of poetry.—*Channing.*

negative, they exclaim that it is a word—air—a trim reckoning! and therefore they'll have none of it! Sir Joshua Reynolds was once present at a meeting of a Society for the encouragement of commerce and manufactures, when Dr. Tucker, the dean of Gloucester, asserted that a pin-maker was a more valuable and useful member of society than Raphaelle. Here was a utilitarian after Bentham's own heart. The painter was naturally indignant, and replied that this was the observation of a narrow mind, that sees with a microscopic eye but a part of the great machine of the economy of life, and takes the small part which he sees to be the whole. Commerce is the means and not the end of happiness. "This kind of argument," continued Sir Joshua, "is like making the brickmaker superior to the architect."

The utilitarians in their theory of morals seem to forget that "we have all of us one human heart;" and address themselves, and in the driest manner, to the understanding alone. Hazlitt is right in his remark, that the cultivation of a *moral sense* is not the last thing that should be attended to; and that truth, when carried alive into the heart by passion and imagination, makes a more vivid and lasting impression than all Bentham's tables and calculations of right and wrong utility and inutility. A tender or spirited poetical illustration may linger on the ear and mind of the reader long after formal and dry discussions are forgotten.*

Bentham's insult to the memory of such men as Homer, Shakespeare, and Milton, (whose art according to him is less valuable than a game at pushpin, and whose writings are only good substitutes for drunkenness and the love of gaming!) must recoil upon his own reputation, be remembered with his own productions, and yet be forgotten some centuries before the names of that illustrious triad. Mr. Mill in his remarks on the faculty of imagination maintains that the poet's trains of ideas end in nothing; that his train is its own end. It is all mere pleasure, or the purpose is frustrated.† In all other

* They who have known what it is, when afar from books, in solitude or travelling, or in the intervals of worldly care, to feed on poetical recollections, to murmur over the beautiful lines whose cadence has long delighted their ear, to recall the sentiments and images which retain by association the charm that early years once gave them—they will feel the inestimable value of committing to the memory, in the prime of its power, what it will easily receive and indelibly retain. I know not, indeed, whether an education that deals much with poetry, such as is still usual in England, has any more solid argument among many in its favour, than that it lays the foundation of intellectual pleasures at the other extreme of life.—Hallam's *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*.

† There is a passage in Bentham on this subject, that shows into what a state of confusion of mind he was apt to be thrown when on the uncongenial subject of poetry. "All that can be alleged," he says, "in diminution of their" (Poetry

men the case is different—the end is important, not the train. This is the case, he says, with the merchant. “His trains are directed to a particular end, and it is the end alone which gives a value to the train. The end of the metaphysical, and the end of the mathematical inquirer is the discovery of truth ; their trains are directed to that object ; and are, or are not, a source of pleasure as that end is, or is not, attained. But the case is perfectly different with the poet.” If this be not a crude, false, and narrow doctrine, I should like to know what is.

The writer, who undertakes the defence of poetry against the aspersions of the literal and coarse-minded, has a difficult task to perform, because in its very nature it is so subtle and intangible, that however mighty its influence, it is impossible to indicate the precise character and extent of its effects. They therefore who have to place it in opposition to grosser and more palpable objects, can only trust for the effect of their arguments to men of kindred minds,—who are able to understand that there are more things in heaven and earth, than are dreamt of in the philosophy of cold and unimaginative reasoners.

SINCE the publication of the first edition of the *Literary Leaves*, I have been favoured with a communication from a celebrated English poet, in which he has made some remarks suggested by the foregoing article on poetry and utilitarianism. They are so confirmatory of my own views, that I cannot resist the temptation to make public use of them. As the name of the writer is suppressed, I feel assured, from what I know of his character, that he will readily excuse the liberty I take in venturing to offer my readers the following extract from his most kind and acceptable letter :—

“The vindication of poetry against utilitarianism particularly deserves commendation, at a time when ‘pushpin,’ in every thing connected with literature is superseding ‘poetry,’—and the ‘*utile*’ in its lowest sense is preferred to the ‘*dulce*’ in its highest. I have myself from time to time in public and in private declaimed not a little against this polished barbarism, this last refinement of excessive civilization, by which all language is to be finally converted into the technical expression of ideas purely abstract, and employed for purposes merely practical,—in the acquisition of sordid wealth and creature-comforts, or in the indulgence of speculations that lead from doubt to doubt on things spiritual,

and the Fine arts’) “*utility* is, that it is limited to the excitement of *pleasure* ; they cannot disperse the clouds of grief and misfortune.” Thus we are told that though poetry *excites pleasure* it *cannot cheer the mind* ! This is philosophy ! Why a game at pushpin, as it can give *pleasure*, may sometimes abstract the mind from *unpleasant* thoughts and *cheer* it. Poetry can do more. It can not only *cheer* but *instruct us*.

and end in nothing if they end in anything,—that is a contradiction, but it suits the subject, where every thing contradicts every thing, and the mind questioning at length its own existence, resolves itself into a series of effects, whether they be called thoughts and sensations, from one great laboratory of causes,—the animal brain, and which, whether they be thoughts or sensations only, are disconnected, though as quickly successive, as the sparks that are generated and instantly extinguished, by the collision of flint and steel. I must break off from this rhapsodical invective, by adding that the prevalence of utilitarianism will not only disenchant the world of all that is poetical and picturesque in it, but will neutralize all that is noble and disinterested in human action by removing the sanctions of eternity from the conscience, and gradually obliterating the sense of responsibility to another and higher tribunal than the earth; without which it is hard to conceive how any man of like passions with ourselves, can be virtuous from principle in the hour of temptation when he can sin to advantage and with impunity. ‘The greatest good to the greatest number,’ the favourite maxim of this class of philosophers, can never be accomplished by any code of laws or system of morals which deals with man, whether singly or in society, as of the ‘earth earthy,’ without the hope of immortality, and the belief of a judgment to come, according to which a state of existence far more important to him than the present will be determined. Utilitarianism, as it is preached and practised, whatever its pretensions may be, is adapted only to the things of time and sense, so far as these can be adapted to the desires and necessities of rational beings with brute destinies, gifted with faculties capable of infinite expansion, yet limited to three score years and ten for their development, and then going to the grave with a surplus of intellect unemployed which might serve to carry them through every uninhabited orb in the universe, were that the soul’s progress after the death of the body, and prepared for all the exercises and enjoyments of heaven itself to eternity, when soul and body shall be reunited, as we are taught by Revelation to expect they will be. No more; you will guess at the meaning of the foregoing verbiage, if I have failed to make it intelligible.”

It is lamentable, indeed, after so much has been written upon the subject of poetry by some of the ablest critics in the world, that it should be yet so little understood.

If we look into the dictionaries for a definition of poetry we shall find that it is “a metrical composition;” and this is all that the generality of thoughtless people seem to have learned about it. It has often happened that even those who ought to know better have had the same narrow conception of its nature.

If poetry were so limited and mean a thing, as the utilitarians would have us suppose it, how is it that the attempt to reduce it to a definition has puzzled so many strong and subtle intellects? Poetry embraces the whole moral and material world. It is as illimitable as the soul of man. That soul is not more distinct in its nature from its clay receptacle, than is the spirit of poetry from the form in which it is embodied. If we speak of poetry merely as an *art*, we may limit it to the imitation of moral and external nature, the poet using words as a painter uses colours. But if we go beyond this, and endeavour to define that peculiar and rare faculty or endowment which enables the poet to give life to inanimate things, and to feel more intensely than other men the loveliness or grandeur of the universe, or if we attempt to analyze the *poetical* or to fix its bounds, we

soon discover that the utmost subtlety may be taxed in vain. The faculty of mind which the poet most exerts is that of the imagination; and assuredly nothing in life is more directly allied to the highest and purest exertions of the noblest imagination than poetry, and this fact alone is a sufficient evidence of its loftiness, and in a high and liberal sense of the word, of its *utility*. "The faculty of imagination," says Dugald Stewart, "is the great spring of human activity and the principal source of human improvement. Destroy that faculty, and the condition of man will be as stationary as that of the brutes."

To limit *utility*, as many of our modern philosophers have done, to material objects and the sciences that administer to the comforts and conveniences of corporeal life, is to degrade our human nature, which in reality is far more nearly allied to a higher order of existence than such reasoners would seem to imply. It is not always quite clear that the sciences which lessen human labour or the sensual luxuries procurable by wealth, have contributed very materially to the true happiness of mankind. The pleasures which all external things can give are speedily exhausted. We soon get accustomed to any external or corporeal advantage derived from wealth or science, and when its novelty is gone, we regard that which was once an addition to our pleasures as nothing but the supply of a necessity. We should feel the want of it far more than we appreciate its possession. But those arts which kindle the imagination and touch the feelings—which elevate and refine our spiritual and moral nature,—are more immediately conversant with the elements of permanent delight. We are not so soon satiated with beautiful images and noble sentiments as with the sensual luxuries of life. In the intellectual banquet the appetite grows with what it feeds on. The more we dwell upon the beauty and sublimity of the visible world, the more we see to love and to admire and the more capable we become of that high enjoyment. We owe it to the great invention of steam that we can travel from one place to another with greater speed than our ancestors, but if we go over the same ground with greater rapidity, is it quite certain that we travel with much lighter hearts or more elevated minds? And of what *utility* is anything in the world of matter or of spirit, except in proportion as it bears a remote or immediate reference to the *heart* and *mind* of man?

Poetry can supply us with neither steamers, nor rail-roads, nor patent umbrellas, nor water-proof India-rubber garments; but it can give us elevated conceptions, and make

us relish with a double zest, those unutterably lovely and glorious objects, with which the great Creator of the universe has surrounded us on every side. The clear bright mirror of a gifted poet's soul, when it reflects the sun, and the moon, and the stars, the richly painted fields and the radiant rivers, communicates to the mass of his fellow-creatures a far deeper sense of nature's loveliness than they obtain through their own fleshly vision. The herd of literal-minded men pass by the miracles of God's own hand with less observation than they bestow upon the meanest productions of human art. But every true poet can exclaim with Wordsworth—

To me the meanest, simplest flowers that blow,
Do raise up thoughts that lie too deep for tears.

Nor of any genuine lover of poetry can it be said that "nature never found the way into his heart," or that

In vain though every changeful year,
Did nature lead him as before ;
A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.

God does not desire us to be indifferent to the charms that He has scattered around us with so lavish a hand.

O how canst thou renounce the boundless store
Of charms which Nature to her votary yields !
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves and garniture of fields ;
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even,
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven—
Oh ! how canst thou renounce and hope to be forgiven ?

It is the poets, especially, who revive in the man of the world a due sense of his original and higher nature, and make him ashamed of wholly sacrificing to sordid pursuits those more exquisite and more innocent delights which God has granted to those who are willing to admire the productions of His hand.

Blessings be with them—and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler hopes and nobler cares—
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight in endless lays !*

* Mankind are much happier that such individuals (Dryden, Pope, Milton and Shakespeare) have lived and written ; they add every day to the stock of public enjoyment, and perpetually gladden and embellish life.—*Edinburgh Review*, Vol. XV., page 310.

It is they who most eloquently teach us that there are other enjoyments in this beautiful world besides those derivable from wealth and worldly station.

I care not, Fortune, what you me deny ;
 You cannot rob me of free Nature's grace ;
 You cannot shut the windows of the sky,
 Through which Aurora shows her brightening face ;
 You cannot bar my constant feet to trace
 The woods and lawns by living streams at eve.
 Let health my nerves and finer fibres brace,
 And I their toys to the great children leave
 Of fancy, reason, virtue, nought can we bereave.

And is that art *useless* which makes us so peculiarly alive to the charms of Nature ? But it is not the external universe alone that the poet brings to the else too sluggish observation of mankind. He not only shows us the wonders of God in material things and in the lower world, but he lifts up the curtain of the far more mysterious and mighty mechanism of the human heart, and reads us the most beautiful and impressive moral lessons ;—he charms us with the fairest examples of virtue, or frightens us from sin by painting it in its truest colours.

Let us look at true poetry from what point of view we please, and we need not hesitate to pronounce that the utilitarians who can speak of it with contempt must be utterly ignorant of its nature. To confound it with mere verse is a piece of silliness and a deficiency of insight, that in this age of liberal education ought to be considered inexcusable in a school-boy. When Byron in a fine enthusiasm called the stars the *poetry of heaven*, and when Thomas Campbell characterized the life of Sir Philip Sydney as *poetry put into action*, these eminent writers had other notions of the nature of poetry than Jeremy Bentham and Mr. Mill. If the utilitarians openly professed a natural antipathy to all that is beautiful or sublime, their opposition to poetry would be more intelligible—for there is nothing in the wide universe that is either beautiful or sublime, that is not *poetical*. When we elevate ourselves above the literal, the mean, and the sordid, we enter the pure atmosphere of poetry. But they who love the ground cannot be expected to appreciate the advantage of a more ethereal region.

FAREWELL STANZAS.

I.

No brighter form e'er flashed on poet's dream
 Than thine, dear lady, virtuous as thou'rt fair,
 Pure as the first gush of a mountain stream,
 Serene and soft as is the summer air.

II.

I've drank the magic of thy voice in song,
 I've watched the pictured wonders of thine hand ;
 Not sweeter sounds the vocal woods prolong,
 Not fairer hues enrobe the sea and land.

III.

A galaxy of charms—a priceless dower—
 Wit, genius, worth, and loveliness are thine ;
 If fortune on the crowd such gifts could shower
 This world might seem unspeakably divine.

IV.

But briar and barren weed and poisonous plant,
 ut-number and o'ergrow the fruits and flowers ;
 The finer spells that hallow and enchant
 The pressure of the vulgar thron'g o'erpowers.

V.

Thy sweetly moulded form—thine angel face—
 The music of thy voice—the blended air
 Of artless innocence and mental grace—
 The radiant spirit Time itself shall spare—

VI.

Oh ! the dear memory of charms like these
 Can ne'er desert and disenchant the heart !
 The wanderer's soul its distant idol sees
 And not in utter darkness I depart.

VII.

From Day's enamoured eye yon western hill
 Conceals the sun, but not its lingering light,
 And thus the severing screen of distance still
 Thine image leaves till death's all-curtaining night.

THE ISLAND OF PENANG.

I.

I STAND upon the mountain's brow—
 I drink the cool fresh mountain breeze—
 I see thy little town below,*
 Thy villas, hedge-rows, fields and trees,
 And hail thee with exultant glow,
 GEM OF THE ORIENTAL SEAS !

II.

A cloud had settled on my heart—
 My frame had borne perpetual pain—
 I yearned and panted to depart
 From dread Bengala's sultry plain—
 Fate smiled,—Disease withholds his dart—
 I breathe the breath of life again !

III.

With lightened heart, elastic tread,
 Almost with youth's rekindled flame,
 I roam where loveliest scenes outspread.
 Raise thoughts and visions none could name,
 Save those on whom the Muses shed
 A spell, a dower of deathless fame.

IV.

I *feel*, but oh ! could ne'er *pourtray*,
 Sweet Isle ! thy charms of land and wave,
 The bowers that own no winter day,
 The brooks where timid wild birds lave,
 The forest hills where insects gay†
 Mimic the music of the brave !

V.

I see from this proud airy height
 A lovely Lilliput below !
 Ships, roads, groves, gardens, mansions white,
 And trees in trimly ordered row,‡
 Present almost a toy-like sight,
 A miniature scene, a fairy show !

* George Town.

† The Hill-trumpeter.

‡ Nutmeg and Clove plantations.

VI.

But lo ! beyond the ocean stream,
That like a sheet of silver lies,
As glorious as a Poet's dream
The grand Malayan mountains rise,
And while their sides in sunlight beam
Their dim heads mingle with the skies.

VII.

Men laugh at bards who live in clouds—
The clouds *beneath* me gather now,
Or gilding slow in solemn crowds,
Or singly, touched with sunny glow,
Like mystic shapes in snowy shrouds,
Or lucid veils on Beauty's brow.

VIII.

While all around the wandering eye
Beholds enchantments rich and rare,
Of wood, and water, earth, and sky
A panoramic vision fair,
The dyal breathes his liquid sigh,
And magic floats upon the air !

IX.

Oh ! lovely and romantic Isle !
How cold the heart thou couldst not please !
Thy very dwellings seem to smile
Like quiet nests 'mid summer trees !
I leave thy shores—but weep the while—
GEM OF THE ORIENTAL SEAS !

Penang, December, 1842.

A LOVER'S THOUGHT

'Tis true that we no more may meet,
Our paths are far apart,
I may not hear thy lips repeat
The dictates of thine heart ;—
Yet though divided thus we stray,
We share love's golden dream,
As 'neath the same unbroken ray
The clouds, though parted, gleam !

LINES TO A LADY SINGING.

A VOICE divine is echoing in my heart—
 The tears are in mine eyes ;—oh ! never, never
 Did holier tones from worldly cares dis sever
 The dreamer's soul ! I feel myself depart
 From life's dim land. Enchantress as thou art,
 Oh ! that thy magic spells could last for ever !
 But bliss eternal owns no mortal giver :—
 The song hath ceased !—I wake with sudden start,
 Like one half-sleeping on a murmuring river,
 When the bark strikes the shore :—the trance is broken !

Hark !—sweeter sounds than aught e'er sung or spoken
 By human lips before, (a seraph's strain,)
 Like floral fragrance from a breeze-stirred bower,
 Float on the ravished atmosphere again !
 Oh exquisite excess ! Oh ! tones too sweet
 For mortal ear with tranquil nerve to meet ;
 The sense is almost troubled with your power.
 Yet cease not—cease not—rain upon my heart,
 Ye showers of song, and drown each thought in bliss
 As wild and wanton as the first sweet kiss
 Wakes in the lover's brain ! * *

As glad birds dart

Through earth's dull mist, and cleaving sunnier air,
 Send down their liquid notes from fields of light,
 So thou, fair Minstrel, seem'st from regions bright
 To breathe celestial hymns ! Thy music rare
 Like matin songs that cheer departing night,
 While charmed Aurora stealeth o'er the height
 Of orient hills, would chase the hideous gloom
 Of desolate hearts wild-struggling with despair,
 And frightened Hope recall !

More sweet than bloom

Of vernal bowers to desert-wearied eyes,
 And sweeter than the sudden sound of streams
 That sun-parched wanderers hear with glad surprise,
 Is thy melodious magic to the breast
 That care hath haunted with her cloud-like dreams,
 Or passion stirred to madness. Blissful rest
 Attends thy voice, thus potent as a word
 From sacred lips when earthly hopes decline,
 Or as those visionary notes divine
 Rapt Mirza on the hills of Bagdat heard.

ON THE RIGHTS OF AUTHORS.

THE London papers have announced that a Commission has been appointed by the French Institute to report on the draft of the proposed treaty of International Copyright between France and England.

We wish the Americans would follow the example of France. Why should a book reaching America from foreign countries be at once confiscated to the use of Brother Jonathan any more than other articles of merchandize? Some years ago there was established a Literary Institution in New York entitled *The American Copyright Club*. This club issued an address to the people on the subject of International copyright, and pledged itself to bring the matter before Congress and produce the enactment of such laws as should place the literary relations between America and foreign countries on equitable grounds. But nothing we believe ever came of these fine promises.

Even in England there is no general respect for literary property, and Talfourd, in his generous exertions in favour of his brethren, was attacked in a way that took him quite by surprise. Even Macaulay opposed him.

For our own part we thought Talfourd rather too moderate in contending for only sixty years of copyright, and he failed even in obtaining that extension. The Act, however, passed in 1842, secures the existence of copyright for forty-two years. By the copyright law of Queen Anne, it was secured for twenty-one years only. Thus an advance has been made in the interests of authors at which they have reason to rejoice, though they have not yet obtained all they are naturally entitled to.

There is no reason why authors should not enjoy the same control over property of their own creation as other men, who are permitted to transmit their possessions to their latest posterity. They have, in fact, in some respects, a superior right, for a book is not a deduction, like many other kinds of property, from the general stock. The author gives more than he receives. He obtains perhaps sufficient profit from his book to supply a single family, while he confers a permanent blessing upon millions. If then a man be entitled to preserve what he gains by *manual* toil, and which benefits but a small number of persons besides himself and his own family, we can see no reason why an author should not enjoy on the same terms the profit arising from his *mental* toil. So far from being satisfied that the property

in a work should be limited to forty-two years, we are disposed to exclaim in the words of Swift—

I can't but think't would sound more clever—
 " To me and to my heirs *for ever!*"

Before the copyright law of Queen Anne, the common law right of authors to a perpetual property in their works was not often disputed, and it was found by a special verdict in the case of "*Miller vs. Taylor*," respecting the copyright of *Thompson's Seasons*, that it was "usual for authors to transfer their copyright from hand to hand for a valuable consideration, and to make the same subject of family settlements for the provision of their wives and children;" and it also appeared that this right had been often protected by Chancery injunctions. Notwithstanding, however, this state of things, literary piracies became so numerous, that an appeal was made to the parliament of Queen Anne for additional protection. This appeal did not proceed from authors, but from publishers, whereas in later times, *the trade* have turned against their employers, and have endeavoured to throw every obstacle in the way of those who contend for the further extension and security of literary property. We are grieved to find the London book-trade of the present day less liberal on this point than the same class of people were a hundred years ago. But if publishers have exhibited an unworthy feeling upon the occasion, there is a class of men who have acted a part still more offensive to every grateful admirer of genius, because it is less excusable. The publishers may possibly imagine, however erroneously, that their own interests and those of their employers are in direct opposition, but that the *press*—that literary men themselves—should be brought to betray the interests of authors is indeed lamentable and surprising. We should be sorry to charge these deserters from their own class with actual dishonesty or corruption, but when we consider the weakness of their reasonings upon the question of copyright with their strength and sagacity upon other subjects, it seems hardly possible to account for so unnatural an opposition unless by supposing that the publications in which they write depend too materially upon the patronage of the book-trade to allow of their expressing their real sentiments with perfect candour.

The interests of society are identical with the interests of authors. As to the publishers, they seem, indeed, strangely ignorant of what their own true interests really are. The more secure and permanent is literary property, the less hazardous are the speculations of publishers. If a well secured copyright costs more money than an ill-secured one, it is at all events better

worth the purchase. The publishers have taken it into their heads that when copyrights become certain and substantial property, authors will never part with them. But authors are proverbially an imprudent race of men, and are more likely to sell their property than other people. Then again, a fear has been expressed that they would put prohibitory prices upon their printed copies, but though authors are imprudent enough, and are bad men of business, they are not idiots. They would soon discover that they themselves would be the chief sufferers by so silly a proceeding. Literature is an article which the producer is always anxious to circulate. There is no species of property which offers more inducements to the possessor to distribute and multiply its advantages. Fame and profit are strong temptations, and these when combined, will generally lead literary men to write as well and as much as they can, and endeavour to secure the widest circulation for their works.

Some people have maintained that literary men are sufficiently rewarded for their labours, and need no protection from the legislature. Now putting aside the consideration that they have the same right as other men to receive and retain all that results from their own toil, let the amount be what it may, we must remember that there is no kind of property of which the gains are so uncertain as *literary* property, and that for one author who has made a fortune by literature, there are thousands who have been ruined by it. The poverty of authors is proverbial. It is true that Walter Scott for a single novel received eight thousand pounds; but how few writers, comparatively speaking, have gained eight thousand shillings by all they ever published. Gibbon received less for his imperishable history, on which he had laboured for twenty years, than Scott obtained for the work of a few months. This leads us to one of the main objects of the last copyright bill, which is the encouragement of authors in the prosecution of extensive and important works that promise no immediate return, and require years of patient and unrewarded labour. Is it not the interest of society to secure to the gifted and learned men who are willing to devote themselves to magnificent and useful undertakings, the certainty of a future provision for themselves or their families, in proportion to the actual value of their productions? We do not complain that such a writer as Dickens makes his immediate thousands, but we *do* complain that before the copyright bill of 1842, the laborious student was prevented from reaping the slow reward of a life of intellectual toil, and that even now he is not secured the full extent of his natural rights.

With respect to what are called the *rights* of the public, as opposed to those of an author, we confess that we can form no conception of their nature. If a man has produced anything whatever from his individual labours, he has surely a clear right to its perpetual possession, and there is no kind of property more peculiarly a man's own than that which is produced from his own mind. He deducts nothing from the general stock. His property is strictly individual, and why should other people have more right to seize upon the work of a man's head, than upon the work of his hand? If he convert it into either fame or money, or both, it is not at the expense of other people's interests. Quite the reverse. When he thus enriches himself, he enriches others, and circulates the advantages of his labour more widely amongst mankind than any other *trader*, if such we may consider him. The opponents of authors seem to regard them not as the benefactors but as the enemies of their species, and invent the most fantastical and foolish theories to persuade the public that authors would be less inclined to exert themselves if their property were more secure. The fact that literary property is in its nature more difficult to define and to protect than any other, is often urged as a reason why it should not be defined or protected at all, but be left open to general pillage! It of course demands on this very account a more particular care and consideration on the part of the legislature. Even the peculiar and great value of literature has been turned against the producer. The public are told of their right to such treasure, which right is founded upon nothing but the preciousness of the thing claimed, and the facility with which it can be purloined from the original proprietor! Nothing can be easier or more absurd than this kind of reasoning.

When it is considered how much literary men have done for society, and how little society has done for them, it might be supposed that their claims, whenever fairly stated, would be earnestly supported by all enlightened persons, who could themselves handle a pen with dexterity and power. But it is not the case. They have been opposed by those from whom we had a right to expect better logic and greater liberality. It is common enough for people to talk with pity and indignation of the calamities of authors, but all this sympathy is confined to the dead, who cannot reap the benefit of it. The living author has always been neglected; and now whenever it is proposed to secure that property to his family and descendants which he may have earned by the labour of his life, there is an eager opposition to his claims that nothing could occasion but the same mean and narrow-minded selfishness which

led our ancestors to permit the men whose names are an honour to their country to die of starvation in the public streets.

The poverty of authors would soon cease to be proverbial, if they were not robbed of their rights by those most benefitted by their labours. The descendants of men of genius might have been amongst the most wealthy of their countrymen, if the smallest possible portion of the profit of each copy of the works of their ancestors had been secured to them by law. And what man, however sordid and selfish, would begrudge a farthing tax upon every copy of a Shakspeare, a Milton a Bacon, or a Newton, if thus devoted to the heirs of those benefactors of mankind? He, who by the accident of his birth, possesses a few hundred acres of land, may hand them down to his remotest posterity and go to his grave with the comfortable assurance that those whom he dearly loves will enjoy without molestation the property which is no longer useful to himself. No man can deprive them of a single square foot of it. But he who by the toil of his own brain has produced a property of incalculable value cannot call it his own beyond the limit of a few years granted reluctantly by the Government of the country which he has benefitted and honoured. While the descendants of the lucky landholder are secured a competence for ever, the descendants of the great Teachers of Mankind are often left

“ To solicit the cold hand of Charity—
To shock us more, solicit it in vain !”

THE VOICE OF LOVE.

Oh! if there is a magic charm, amid this desert drear,
The long, dull, weary way to cheat—our darkest dreams to cheer,
It is the tender voice of Love, that echoes o’er the mind
Like music on a twilight lake, or bells upon the wind.

Oh! dread would be the rugged road, and sad the wanderer’s heart,
Should that celestial harmony from life’s dim sphere depart!
Oh! how, for that far distant land, would sigh the lonely breast,
‘ Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.’

SONNETS.

WRITTEN IN EXILE.

I.

MAN'S heart may change, but Nature's glory never ;—
 And while the soul's internal cell is bright,
 The cloudless eye lets in the bloom and light
 Of earth and heaven to charm and cheer us ever.
 Though youth hath vanished, like a winding river
 Lost in the shadowy woods ; and the dear sight
 Of native hill and nest-like cottage white,
 'Mid breeze-stirred boughs whose crisp leaves gleam and
 quiver,
 And murmur sea-like sounds, perchance no more
 My homeward step shall hasten cheerily ;
 Yet still I feel as I have felt of yore,
 And love this radiant world. Yon clear blue sky—
 These gorgeous groves—this flower-enamelled floor—
 Have deep enchantments for my heart and eye.

II.

Man's heart may change, but Nature's glory never ;
 Though to the sullen gaze of grief the sight
 Of sun-illumin'd skies may *seem* less bright,
 Or gathering clouds less grand, yet she, as ever,
 Is lovely or majestic. Though fate sever
 The long-linked bands of love, and all delight
 Be lost as in sudden starless night,
 The radiance may return, if He, the giver
 Of peace on earth, vouchsafe the storm to still.
 This breast once shaken with the strife of care
 Is touched with silent joy. The cot—the hill
 Beyond the broad blue wave—and faces fair,
 Are pictured in my dreams ; yet scenes that fill
 My waking eye can save me from despair.

III.

Man's heart may change, but Nature's glory never ;—
 Strange features throng around me, and the shore
 Is not my father-land. Yet why deplore
 This varied doom ? All mortal ties must sever—

The pang is past ;—and now with blest endeavour
 I check the rising sigh, and weep no more.
 The common earth is here—these crowds adore
 That earth's Creator ; and how high soever
 O'er other tribes proud England's hosts may seem,
 God's children, fair or sable, equal find
 A father's love. Then learn, O man, to deem
 All difference idle save of heart or mind :
 Thy duty, love—each cause of strife, a dream—
 Thy home, the world—thy family, mankind.

Cossipore, 1839.

SOUNDS AT SEA.

THE weary sea is tranquil, and the breeze
 Hath sunk to sleep on its slow-heaving breast.
 All sounds have passed away, save such as please
 The ear of Night, who loves that music best
 The din of day would drown.—The wanderer's song,
 To whose sweet notes the mingled charms belong
 Of sadness linked to joy,—the breakers small
 (Like pebbled rills) that round the vessel's bow
 A dream-like murmur make,—the splash and fall
 Of waters crisp, as rolling calm and slow,
 She laves alternately her shining sides,—
 The flap of sails that like white garments vast
 So idly hang on each gigantic mast,—
 The regular tread of him whose skill presides
 O'er the night-watch, and whose brief fitful word
 The ready helmsman echoes : these low sounds
 Are all that break the stillness that surrounds
 Our lonely dwelling on the dusky main.
 But yet the visionary soul is stirred,
 While fancy hears full many a far-off strain
 Float o'er the conscious sea !—The scene and hour
 Control the spirit with mysterious power ;
 And wild unutterable thoughts arise,
 That make us yearn to pierce the starry skies !

STANZAS IN RETURN FOR A SONG.

I.

O'ER the lake's smiling surface, when kissed by the moon—
 On green hills at sun-rise—in still woods at noon—
 In isles, fairy-haunted—in caves on the shore—
 Hath the poet oft heard mystic music before.

II.

But never, Oh, never, have tones such as thine—
 So entrancing and dream-like—so truly divine—
 Breathed a glory around, or with magical art
 So bewildered his spirit or melted his heart.

III.

If the fragrance of spring when the dew's on the ground
 And the fair hues of flowers were turned into sound—
 If the rich glow of sun-set—the gay tints of morn,
 Could speak a sweet language to scenes they adorn—

IV.

If the looks of the lovely—if virtue and worth—
 And all that is brightest and best on the earth—
 Were but made in one musical spell to combine,
 It would seem, dear Enchantress, an echo of thine !

LONDON, IN THE MORNING.

THE morning wakes, and through the misty air
 In sickly radiance struggles—like the dream
 Of sorrow-shrouded hope. O'er Thames' dull stream,
 Whose sluggish waves a wealthy burden bear
 From every port and clime, the pallid glare
 Of early sun-light spreads. The long streets seem
 Unpeopled now, but soon each path shall teem
 With hurried feet, and visages of care ;
 And eager throngs shall meet where dusky marts
 Resound like ocean-caverns, with the din
 Of toil and strife and agony and sin.
 Trade's busy Babel ! Ah ! how many hearts
 By lust of gold to thy dim temples brought
 In happier hours have scorned the prize they sought !

CHEOPS ; OR, THE GREAT PYRAMID AT GIZEH.

WHAT forms majestic, once to fame well known,
 (Some yet remembered in their sleep of death,)
 Have stood where I now stand ! How oft the breath
 (For ages hushed in dumb sepulchral stone,)
 Of potent king, rapt bard, or sage serene,
 In this lone sea of sand, so wide and bare,
 A human charm hath thrown upon the scene,
 And broke the dreadful silence of the air !

Mine the sole heart now beating at the base
 Of this vast pile—eternal mount sublime
 Up-reared by mortal hand ! My strained eyes trace
 The top-most steps against the bright blue sky
 Until my panting spirit yearns to climb
 Higher and higher still.—This may not last—
 Ah no ! the weight of mortal mystery
 Brings me to earth.—

— The future and the past
 Crowd on the present, like blent clouds on high,
 When the winds meet, or waves upon the sea,
 Or dim bewildering dreams, confused and vast.

No daily sight is here—no common sound—
 To disenchant the pale earth's trance profound
 The sense of solitude, the solemn fear,
 When lonely things eterne oppress the brain,
 Now make me wish a human voice to hear
 And greet some kind familiar face again.

Egypt, 1843.

SONNET—EVENING AT SEA.

How calm and beautiful ! The broad sun now
 Behind its rosy curtain lingering stays,
 Yet downward and above the glorious rays
 Pierce the blue flood, and in the warm air glow ;
 While clouds from either side, like pillars, throw
 Their long gigantic shadows o'er the main !—
 Between their dusky bounds, like golden rain,
 Though still the sun-beams on the wave below
 A shower of radiance shed, the misty veil
 Of twilight spreads round—the orient sky
 Is mingling with the sea—the distant sail
 Hangs like a dim-discovered cloud on high,
 And faintly bears the cold unearthly ray
 Of yon pale moon, that seems the ghost of day

THE NEW YEAR AND THE OLD.

[WRITTEN ON THE NIGHT OF THE LAST DAY OF THE YEAR.]

THE Old Year and the New Year are now quickly meeting, and will separate in less than the shake of a skylark's wing, or the single glimmer of a star!

"We take no note of time but by its loss," and are not easily reminded of the purport and rapidity of our voyage down the stream of life. If it were not for the land-marks and divisions which are visible in our course, we should glide onward to the vast waters of eternity with a perfect unconsciousness of our progress. It is well, therefore, to preserve, as far as possible, those ancient customs which celebrate the advent of particular seasons, and render them memorable and distinct. The vigil on the last night of the old year, to welcome the arrival of the new one, is, abstractedly considered, a beautiful and affecting practice, though it is unhappily too often attended with inebriation and vulgar merriment. Nothing can be less appropriate to the season than jollity and uproar. If there be any one period that seems more essentially suited to sober thought than another, it is this. There is something ungracious in the manner in which we mix our merry welcome of the new year with our farewell to the past year, which is like an old familiar face, fraught with many tender and solemn associations.

Though, like other men, I have sometimes looked towards the future with eagerness and curiosity, I am far more disposed to linger over the memory of departed hours. I feel no peculiar satisfaction in parting with an ancient friend, nor can I hail his successor without some feeling of distrust. But the generality of mankind are naturally gamblers, and are ever ready to risk their accustomed pleasures for the chance of new ones. Those who have once lost their hearts to Fortune can never be persuaded that she will continue indifferent to their claims, however scornfully she may treat them for a while. The advice of the wise, and their own sad experience, are equally unprofitable to those who are blinded by ambition and self-will. Men of ardent temperaments and of an active life, which leaves little time for thought, have generally a very slight regard for the past, and launch all their happiness on the deceitful future. They fancy themselves more shrewd and practical than the philosopher, who, because he occasionally retraces his path in the soft twilight of imagination, is considered a visionary idler. They know not the stuff of which life is made, and are themselves in a wild

delusion. What is the future, for which they wear out their hearts and minds with such incessant toil?—a nonentity—the dream of a dream. The past, on the other hand, is a storehouse of treasures that are lodged beyond the reach of fate. While we have life and memory, they are ours. We could not have them longer. This is equivalent to an eternity of enjoyment, for it ends but with our consciousness of good and evil. The future is rife with disappointment. The present glides by us while we breathe its name. We may as well endeavour to grasp water in the hand, as to retain such a small and slippery division of human life. It is, indeed, an inexpressibly insignificant portion of existence, and is chiefly valuable as we make it worthy to live in our recollection after its departure. As the past then forms so large a share of our being, it is strange that men should bring themselves to regard it with indifference, and to waste all their thoughts upon things and seasons yet unborn. As we cannot take a last look at the meanest material object, around which is breathed an atmosphere of old associations, it seems almost inexplicable that we should be so ready to insult the departing year with the loud peals of joyance. Our ancient friend is laden with a weight of many cares and pleasures; but because the stores are familiar and the bearer is old, ought both to be despised? If a strange face and untried goods are at our door, and the old guest must necessarily resign his place to the new one, this merriment at parting with the former is at least ill-timed. As he glides away from the scene into the shades of night, with what a child-like eagerness do men clamorously welcome his successor, who comes like a plausible peddler from a foreign land. They gaze greedily on his glittering wares, and grasp at the brittle bubbles of hope, the glided dross of avarice, and the drums and rattles of ambition.

I know nothing of the future. I look upon the past as a well-tryed friend that has departed for an eternal exile. Its evil qualities are written on water, its good on adamant. I lament that it is gone, and grieve that I did not better appreciate its worth before. I see it now through an altered medium, unblinded by fear or hope or passion. I cannot scan the advancing year with the same facility and precision. The future is like the mist that hangs about the dawn of day. Coming objects loom largely in the shade, but dwindle as the light increases. The past is like an evening landscape bathed in the lingering glory of a departed sun. Our retrospections are generally of a nature far more pure and holy than our hopes and our desires. The evil-minded do not dwell fondly upon the past. Men love to recall the memory

of their best actions, and not their worst. The stern and heartless rush recklessly forward,

“And cast no longing, lingering look behind.”

The gaiety of ingenuous childhood—the first smile of innocent love—the cordiality and disinterestedness of youthful friendship—our earliest impressions of the beauty of human life and the loveliness of external nature—the whispered prayers at a mother's knee ere the consciousness of sin made us dread our great Creator—these are amongst the many recollections that hallow and endear the past, and which would be ill exchanged for the vague and uncertain visions of the future.

Even if the past has been to some a season of affliction, who can say that the new year will be less unhappy? We know the worst of one—we know literally nothing of the other. The dreariest path has ever some few verdant spots that may be looked back upon with a feeling of interest, and even remembered sorrows do not irritate us like those which are anticipated, but on the contrary often assume an aspect that is strangely pleasing. Their bitterness has passed away. If Hope never deviates from her onward path, nor mingles in the train of departing seasons, Memory is a safer and sweeter, though less brilliant companion, and her footsteps are unfollowed by the fiend Despair. I have already adverted to the pure and virtuous and refined emotions which are awakened by the contemplation of the past. Let those who doubt the truth of this, reflect how much more ready they are to forgive old injuries or vexations than such as are experienced in the present or anticipated in the future. We recollect ancient quarrels with self-accusation and a generous allowance. Former rivalries and contests now seem to have been unnecessarily fierce and virulent. A change has come over us, and our hearts are softened. We cannot dwell, therefore, too much upon the past. It is a gentle teacher of virtue, wisdom and benevolence. We listen to its solemn voice with a mysterious reverence and a severe delight. The most trivial relics of our earlier life are treasured things. They gleam out from the dusky shadows of departed years like gems seen by moonlight. “Heaven lies about us in our infancy.”

Our first pure pleasures are yet in Memory's holy keeping. However rough and dreary may be our onward pilgrimage, she, like a heavenly spirit, still haunts and cheers us with her magic mirror.

It were a pitiful philosophy that would deprive us of such enchantments as these, and make us look upon the varied and

delightful volume of the past as a dead letter. Thoughts are things, and form quite as essential a part of our actual existence, as our flesh and blood.

We should reckon not our life by years and days, but by what we do and think. In this way a short life might be made a long one, by the quantity of ideas and deeds that would be crowded into its narrow span. Such is the life of angels, and the only one that is worthy of intellectual beings. Spirits have no marks of time. The idler and the slumberer only exist at intervals, for vacuity and sleep are a partial death.

The noon of night is fast approaching. Now for the farewell toll to the departing year, and the shouts of welcome to the stranger ! But hark ! the clock has struck ! The mystic change is over. The new year has come—the old one has departed. As at the death and succession of mighty monarchs, we mingle sighs and gratulations, and merriment and mourning. It is a sample of the varieties and incongruities of human life. We resemble those hasty and fickle lovers who receive a new partner ere the predecessor is cold and buried. The gay bridal chariot dashes against the slow solemn hearse. The funeral-baked meats furnish forth the marriage table. But let others run riot as they may at the fresh arrival, and worship the rising sun, my own heart still yearns towards the vanished year. I have learnt its worst qualities and its best, and the first are softened, and the last increased by the tender hand of Time. Before me all is darkness. I see not

“ Through what variety of untried being,
Through what new scenes and dangers I must pass.”

With reference to the future I can be certain but of one solemn fact, that the new year brings me nearer to that awful period, when even the past, which now lives so vividly in remembrance, will be utterly annihilated, and

“ This sensible warm motion will become
A kneaded clod.”

I turn from this chilling prospect with stifled breath, and think of “ the blind cave of eternal night ” with a dread revulsion ;—for I love the blue skies, the green fields and the crystal air. I would still listen to the sound of merry voices, and meet the radiant faces of the young and gay. I would study and commune with living wisdom, and trace the wondrous intellectual advances of mankind. Oh ! it is terrible to receive a mandate to depart

“ From the warm precincts of the cheerful day,”

ere youth and hope have left us ; to quit the glittering and crowded theatre of life, for the dark, solitary and silent cell

of death To be forced from the scene at a fate-fraught period like the present, when such mighty moral revolutions are at work, is like being dragged from the spectacle of an unfinished drama at the moment when we are most interested in its progress. But alas ! the fairest and the proudest of human beings must bow submissively to the stern voice of Asrael, come when he may, and lie in "cold obstruction," while many a loathsome reptile is basking in the pleasant sun ! Our dearest friends and kindred, our own cherished offspring, will at last walk over the cold damp sod which presses upon our breasts, with as much gaiety and thoughtlessness as if we had never been.

It is law of our nature that the image of death is ever thrust from our minds by the strong antagonist principle of vitality, and while our veins are supplied with pure and healthy blood, the visions of the charnel house are faint and powerless. They may laugh at death who do not vividly apprehend its nature. The healthy and the happy cannot see it. There are too many bright objects between them and the grave. What we take for courage is often mere obtuseness of mind or strength of nerve. A fit of sickness or meditation works a wondrous change. Perhaps no human being ever looked death in the face without a shudder. The hero who marches up to the cannon's mouth, beholds not the King of Terrors on his path. Through the din and smoke of the mortal strife, he is drawn onward by the glittering eye of Fame, that wins him to destruction, as the deadly serpent is said to fascinate its prey. He that would die boldly and proudly in the presence of assembled thousands, would shrink aghast from an unseen struggle with the last dread enemy of man. A desire for death or even an indifference to life, is a moral disease, and is not consistent with our nature, in which the principle of self-preservation is so deeply planted. The fear of the grave may indeed be easily evaded, but never perhaps fairly and entirely overcome. The thirst of glory, and the consolations of religion do not make us friendly with death on its own account ; but render us proof against its terrors by filling our minds with more congenial images, and by presenting us with glimpses of a paradise beyond the gloomy gratings of the tomb. And yet if we philosophically contemplate the relations of life and death, our horror of annihilation seems utterly unreasonable. It is as natural to die as it is to live. In fact, life itself is "a daily death." As far as yesterday is concerned, we are already dead. Literally speaking, we exist but in the present. In a few brief years both mind and body undergo as complete a revolution as the change from animal to vegetable existence. We are

at last no more the same beings, than echoes are original sounds. We bear but a faint resemblance to our former selves. Had we dropped into the grave in our dawn of life, our childhood would not have been more unequivocally dead than it now is. Our youth must also die and next our manhood, and when old age, says Montaigne, is carried to the tomb, it is but an additional death. "Why," he continues, "should we so dread the last? Our death is a part of the life of the universe which exists by incessant change." Nothing is stationary, and change is a partial annihilation. We do but make room for other existences. Our bodies either turn into masses of animal life, or give vitality to green herbs and flowers. We look upon the death of our childhood without fear and trembling. We do not lament that we were dead a century ago, and why should we grieve because a century hence we shall be in the same condition. We are shocked that the heavens should shine as brightly and men live as joyously after our decease, as during our brief sojourn upon earth. But it was the same before our birth. No sign or change in nature heralded our advent. Of how little importance is the greatest individual to the world, and yet of how much importance is the humblest to himself!

It seems one of the many strange anomalies of the human mind, that it should be so eager to anticipate the future, and yet shrink back with such repugnance from that consummation to which our progress so inevitably leads. We hurry forward as if the end of life were all that we could desire. The vast number and the sociality of our fellow travellers make us forget the goal of our pilgrimage. If any single individual were to feel that he alone in the countless crowd were doomed to certain death, at a fixed period, however remote, he would look forward with a feeling too horrible for words to paint. The uncertainty of each man's allotted time, and the community of our fate, make us less thoughtful and more contented. Though it is not precisely as the poet has observed, that

"All men think all men mortal but themselves,"

yet each individual believes in his own good fortune, and expects a long lease of life. He flatters himself that he shall survive his associates; that he shall be the last called to the dread account. He has so often escaped before, that he quells every fresh alarm with the hope of a continuation of the same happy chances. The idea of death, as I have already explained, is received with so much difficulty by those who are conscious of the strong impregnation of life through their whole system, that the most trivial objects may call off their

attention from the subject. Such is the power of a happy imagination and a healthy frame.

Were we embarked on a voyage to a hostile foreign shore, and knew ourselves condemned to be stripped, tortured, and hung by savage hands, we should think the longest passage too short, and curse the swiftness of our vessel. A few pleasant islands in our course would not drive away the anticipation of the last port. But as we travel towards the narrow house to lie down in darkness and corruption, we are impatient of a moment's delay, and the great object in life seems to be to shorten its duration. It is a happy thing, however, that the mind is thus strangely constituted, and that we are able to close our eyes against unpleasing prospects, and turn away our thoughts from the end of all things.

There is no period of the life of man so interesting as its close. A birth occasions less excitement than a death. A new-born human being is rarely an object of particular interest to any portion of mankind, except to those who have introduced him to the world; but the lowliest spirit that ever wore human clay is dignified in the eyes of all men at the final hour. Even the poor fleshly frame which once perhaps afforded food for merriment, or a mark for scorn's poisoned arrows, is then regarded with a profound and mysterious reverence. We enter the death-chamber of the rudest peasant with a slow and solemn step, as if we trod upon holy ground. A too abrupt or a too easy manner would seem a sacrilege. We stand near his simple coffin in religious silence, or speak in whispers, as if fearful of disturbing his awful slumber. All ordinary and familiar sounds are like a mockery of the eternal sleeper. His cold clay is hallowed. The mightiest of earthly potentates would approach him with respect. As he lies in his silent state, there is a strange power in his fixed and pallid lineaments. He is the representative of the majesty of death.

The golden portals of palaces fly open at the approach of the King of Terrors, as freely as the shepherd's wicker gate. Neither massy battlements, nor valorous guards, nor the power of the state, nor the prayers of the priesthood, nor the ingenuity of art, nor the magic of beauty, nor the might of genius, nor the holiness of virtue, can protect the domestic hearth from that general and relentless foe. His silent footstep giveth no warning. We know not when he may steal upon us. This uncertainty is an additional horror. We know when the trees are to wither and the flowers are to fade. We prepare for the approach of winter. But death has no stated season. He comes in youth and in age, in sickness and in health. He casts no shade before him. This

mighty and mysterious visitor from an unknown world is more terrible than the simoom of the desert. He blasts the greenest landscape of life at a single breath. Like a dread magician, he enters invisibly our most secret haunts, and strikes us to the ground with his unseen wand.

When the sense of our mortality comes heavily upon the heart, what a pitiful delusion is human life! We look around us in this busy scene, and echo the exclamation of the preacher that "all is vanity!" At such a moment a film is removed from our mental vision, "a change comes over the spirit of our dreams," and that which lately seemed serious and important, we discover to be vain and idle; while all that once charmed us becomes a mournful mockery. We gaze with pity and with wonder upon those who are still labouring under the same delusion from which we ourselves have awaked; their laughter seems hysterical and their merriment hollow. The feeling in some degree resembles, though it greatly exceeds it in intensity, the effect of closing the ears to the music of a ball-room and watching the movements of the dancers. It is recorded of an impassioned Italian poet that he could never look upon such a scene, even with its musical accompaniments, without laughing and shuddering at the same moment. With a similarly blended sentiment of the ludicrous and the sad do we gaze upon life's giddy whirl, when the golden mist of enchantment evaporates from the scene. When the remembrance of death throws a shadow upon the soul and chills the blood, our only true consolation is the thought of Him who gave us life on earth and decreed that death should but usher us into eternal existence in a brighter and a better world.

But to return to the consideration of my more immediate subject;—let me not conclude without hailing the New Year, with a somewhat kinder greeting than it has yet received. I may not look upon it with the same affection as the old one, but it is not wholly unattractive. The thirst for novelty makes every New Year a welcome visitor to most men. It suggests fresh plans and inspires fresh hopes. Life and the world seem adapted to our impatience of stillness and monotony. The ever-fitting forms and hues of external nature, the endless variety of human faces and human character, and the phantasmagorial progression of events, are all ministrant to our taste for change. If I cannot on the whole be so enthusiastic in my welcome to the present year as in my farewell to the past one, let it be remembered, that should I live another season, its aspect and character will be changed, and like its predecessor, it will be hailed at parting with a thoughtful sigh.

THE FRIEND'S QUARREL.

I.

FAIR Lady ! as though friendship's chain seem broken,
 It holds, with wonted force, this faithful heart,
 I fain reserve's delusive veil would part,
 And learn if haply yet some lingering token
 Of old regard and tenderness supprest
 Remaineth lurking in thy gentle breast.

II.

Fate with no heavier blow nor keener sting
 May crush or goad us, when the genial power
 Of friendship fails and trifles of an hour
 Rend each dear link that from our early spring,
 Held us in pleasant thrall. The cup of life
 Bears nought so bitter as the drops of strife !

III.

Alas ! I may not meet thee in the crowd
 Unmoved—for in thy sweet familiar face,
 The hallowed past hath left a startling trace :—
 At once, with sudden impulse, fond and proud,
 My bosom heaves—unconsciously my feet
 Approach thee, and my lips thy name repeat !

IV.

But oh ! the deadly pang, the freezing chill,
 When by the calm gaze of that altered eye
 The spell is broken ! Lady, if the sigh
 That meets thine ear could say what feelings thrill
 This troubled heart, or what my sad looks meant,
 Methinks e'en thy stern coldness might relent.

V.

I cannot think that all our mutual dreams
 Were false as twilight shadows, nor believe
 Thine heart could change, or words like thine deceive ;
 And still as travellers for the sun's bright beams
 Up-gaze in hope, though clouds may lour awhile,
 I wait and watch for thy returning smile.

THE LOVERS' QUARREL.

I.

AND can'st thou leave me thus ? Oh, say *farewell* !
 E'en grant one gracious look before we part
 For *ever*—and the troubled thoughts that swell
 So fearfully in this o'erburthened heart
 Shall own a momentary lull serene,
 Like sun-soothed billows blustering storms between.

II.

Still this averted eye ?—this silence cold—
 This sullen cloud upon a brow so fair—
 This lifeless languor of the hand I hold
 Without its will—this spirit-freezing air,
 Never before by frame so lovely worn—
 This dumb rebuke—and this curved lip of scorn ?

III.

Alas ! that eye and brow and lip and hand,
 Late ministrant to Love's unclouded heaven,
 Are lost to me. I may not now command
 E'en the kind word to parting strangers given,
 Nor one relenting look, although the last,
 In this death-hour of all the tender past.

IV.

How frail is language when, as dark as death,
 The panting heart its muffled woes would speak !
 Sleep's night-mare struggle, or the bubbling breath
 Of drowning mariner, is not more weak ;
 Or even thou soft pity's pang should'st learn
 And cease to stand so statue-like and stern.

V.

'Tis but a dream ! It cannot be that thou
 So tender once and true, so bright and warm,
 Can'st bear a frozen heart, though on that brow
 Stern Winter seem to reign. Alas ! what charm
 May break this dreadful trance—once more make known
 That blue eye's liquid glow, that lip's love-tone ?

VI.

Oh, sunshine of my day—my star of night !
 Queen of my waking hours, and of my dreams
 The one pervading image !—if thy light
 Pass from me now, as pass the solar beams

Down the flushed west on foreign brows to shine,
What were the darkness of the grave to mine ?

VII.

Art silent still ?—Oh, dearest Lady, *speak*,
Nor mock me like the dead ! If ever tone
Or look of mine hath roused that spirit meek,
Or turned a soft and loving heart to stone,
Forgive—forgive ;—I bow me to the dust,
And with repentant throes to mercy trust.

VIII.

Lo ! the dark cloud dissolves, and gracious rain
Falls gently from the dimmed cerulean eye !
I hear that soft melodious voice again,
More sweet than streamlet's laugh or zephyr's sigh,—
Oh, Love's divinest Priestess, never more
Try my heart's faith with such dread penance sore !

SONNET.

WRITTEN ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGES.

How fraught with music, beauty and repose,
'This holy time, and solitude profound !
The lingering day along the mountain glows ;
With songs of birds the twilight woods resound.
Through the soft gloom, yon sacred fanes around,
The radiant fly* its mimic lightning throws ;
Fair Gunga's stream along the green vale flows,
And gently breathes a thought-awakening sound !
Such hour and scene my spirit loves to hail,
When nature's smile is so divinely sweet—
When every note that trembles on the gale,
Seems caught from realms untrod by mortal feet—
Where everlasting harmonies prevail—
Where rise the purified, their God to greet !

* The fire-fly.

STANZAS.

I.

'Tis one brief week, since thou and I
 Sat hand in hand, and side by side ;
 Now each beholds a different sky,
 From crowded streets, from waters wide.
 Though round me blue waves brightly roll,
 And o'er me heaven's broad arch is fair,
 Still lingering turns my faithful soul
 To solemn London's misty air.

II.

'Mid that vast city's countless walls,
 One small dim room is dear to me ;
 For deepest gloom unheeded falls,
 Where mutual hearts love's visions see.
 And hours Elysian oft were mine
 When the sick day grew dun as night,
 For still that star-like eye of thine
 Would kindle with an inward light.

III.

I mix with other men, but find
 Their thoughts and mine are not the same ;
 The cloud of care is on my mind,
 The curse of sickness on my frame ;
 And saddened and reserved and lone,
 I feel life's burden hard to bear,
 Save when sweet Woman's gentler tone
 Breathes more than magic in mine ear.

IV.

When thine unrivalled beauty shone
 Within the dear, though dusky room,
 Like Cynthia's on her silver throne
 Thy brightening brow dispersed the gloom ;
 And when thy fond and playful wile
 Hath cheated grief of all her store
 Oh, never tone, or touch, or smile
 So thrilled a lover's frame before !

V.

Lady, those farewell tears of thine,
 From love's blue heaven a sacred shower,
 Were like the fabled fount divine
 Whose every drop became a flower ;
 For fair and precious fancies rose
 E'en while I watched those bright tears start,
 And now where'er thy wanderer goes
 He bears an Eden in his heart !

FRANCIS JEFFREY.

FRANCIS JEFFREY was a most laborious, sagacious and conscientious expounder of the laws of the land ; but it is as the expounder of the laws of taste and criticism—as the literary and not the legal judge—that he will be remembered by posterity. The rarity of high literary attainments and their wide and momentous influence must always be practically acknowledged by the world at large ; though to a superficial observer the more immediate and palpable effect of the labours of men in the professions that supply the immediate demands of life seems to throw the poet or the critic into a state of comparative insignificance and inutility. But posterity adjusts the scales, and then the true weight is known. Francis Jeffrey, the critic, was a far more important personage than Lord Jeffrey, the judge. In the latter capacity he merited and obtained the commendation and respect of his fellow-citizens,—in the former he was admired in the four quarters of the world.

There has been a great revolution in taste and criticism since Jeffrey guided the public mind. This led us to fear when we saw the announcement of the death of this eminent individual, that the event would create comparatively little sensation in the literary world, and that the new race of critics who have sprung up since his time would treat with but slight respect the memory of a man whose decisions were so different from their own. We have been agreeably disappointed ; for upon the whole the public journals have spoken of him with generosity and justice, though some two or three have not hesitated to sneer at what they esteem his erroneous criticism upon the first poet of his day.

The world has not often seen so sagacious a critic on elegant literature, and especially on poetry, as Francis Jeffrey. He was the best critical contributor to the best critical publication that Europe has produced. One or two of his coadjutors surpassed him in depth of learning, in originality of thought, and in force of style ; he had not the wit of Sydney Smith nor the brilliancy of Macaulay, but he had singular grace, clearness and copiousness and felicity of diction, and in a delicate perception of the faults and beauties of a poet's works, we venture to say, that he never had a superior.

A true critic on poetry is far less frequently met with than a true poet. It would not, perhaps, be difficult to mention some twenty British poets of the nineteenth century, whose genius is beyond dispute ; but is there any thing like the same number.

of critics of poetry to whose decisions the world is willing to bow with unquestioning submission? Certainly not. Even poets themselves are often miserable judges of the productions of their own brethren.* Lord Byron, for example, was one of the very worst critics that ever lived. Poets themselves, in judging of poetry, are not unfrequently wilful, partial, and exclusive. In general they can only truly relish the kind of poetry which they have cultivated themselves, and even with respect to that favoured department of the art, sometimes betray a perversity of taste, and an obliquity of vision when the merits of a rival are to be considered. As to readers in general, they are quite incapable of forming an opinion for themselves. When a new poem appears, they dare not pretend to commend or blame it until they know the decision of the critics. Jeffrey was *almost* infallible. His taste was catholic. He could appreciate excellencies of the most opposite kinds. His discrimination of beauties and defects was so exquisitely subtle and true, that it was analogous to the touch of a blind man, compared with the rude rough gropings of other men when thrown into unaccustomed darkness. His mind seemed to *feel* distinguishing differences, with a most delicate and unerring truthfulness. No critic ever analyzed or defined the peculiarities of a poet more accurately, more distinctly, more eloquently, than Francis Jeffrey; and yet Wordsworth calls him the worst critic that Scotland ever produced, a soil, he says, especially prolific in such weeds. In the eyes of many of the present race of critics, Jeffrey's review of *The Excursion* is the greatest error that he ever committed. Yet thirty years after the publication of that famous criticism, Jeffrey lived to say that the opinions he had formerly expressed were in no degree altered. Nor do we see why they should have been. Jeffrey does the fullest justice in that critique to Wordsworth's high powers, while he points out those defects which all his *reasonable* admirers, even in the present day, are willing to acknowledge. It is very remarkable that all the poets whom Jeffrey highly praised have kept their station to this moment. He made not a single mistake. He never spoke of the immortality of men whose reputation was dead the following quarter. This is a rare triumph. To judge of its value, let any man turn over the pages of the periodical literature of the last ten or twenty years, and see how many forgotten writers have been called Miltons and Shakespeares; how many illustrious

* As we have shown in a preceding essay—On False Criticism by True Poets.

obscurities have been puffed in vain!* Besides this fine faculty of discrimination—so important to a critic—Jeffrey had the advantage of a singularly flowing and lucid style, and though he never hesitated to point out defects, he was always both humane and gentlemanly. His satire was more playful than pungent, and it was evident that he spoke more cordially and from the heart when he had an opportunity to praise, even his opponents, than when he was called upon to censure them. He was a critic that would have satisfied Pope, who says,

Learn then what *morals* critics ought to show
For 'tis but half a judge's task to *know*,
'Tis not enough taste, judgment, learning join,
In all you speak let truth and candour shine.
That not alone what to your sense is due
All may allow, but seek your friendship too.

All the poets whom Jeffrey criticised, *did* seek his friendship, with the exception of Wordsworth, Southey and Coleridge, who never forgot or forgave a good-natured laugh at some of the peculiarities of their style.†

* Let us adduce a single specimen of the way in which our public critics distribute *immortal* reputations. Perhaps few of our readers have heard of Mr. Heraud and his Epic Poem—*The Judgment of the Flood*. And yet some of the leading periodicals of London about sixteen years ago pronounced it equal to *Paradise Lost*: one of them said it was superior. It was equally well spoken of in Ireland, where it was first published. *Fraser's Magazine* (a clever periodical too) said it was "*one of the noblest poems with which modern genius has enriched our language and nation.*" "It is perhaps," adds the reviewer, "*the noblest poem of modern times*"—and this, in spite of what has been done by Byron, Scott, Southey, Shelley, Wordsworth, and Coleridge! These "are little men." "He," Mr. Heraud, "is capable of shedding a redeeming light on this petty age of little men." The same reviewer says, that after perusing Mr. Heraud's colloquy of angels, the reader may turn "to similar passages in Milton without any dreary sensation of having sustained a fall—a difference may be perceived, but no unseemly *disparity*." The advertisement of the book directs the public to similar notices in the *Quarterly Review*, *Literary Gazette*, *Athenaeum*, *Atlas*, &c. &c. We are told that "the plot and characters are indeed majestic, and while merely as poetry the volume surpasses all modern attempts; as a story, it is as interesting and as *likely to be popular as a novel or romance*." The book was published in 1834. *Where is it now?* Mr. Heraud, we believe, is a man of talent, perhaps of genius—but instead of being made immortal by his critics, he has been killed untimely by outrageous laudation. Jeffrey never criticised in this style; but there is now scarcely a periodical that does not announce almost every month a new Shakespeare or Milton. Very few critics, indeed, are capable of forming an independent and correct judgment of a new poem. Jeffrey was amongst the few.

† And all our little feuds, at least all *mine*,
Dear Jeffrey, once my most redoubted foe,
(As far as rhyme and criticism combine
To make such puppets of us things below),
Are over: here's a health to "Auld Lang Syne!"
I do not know you, and may never know
Your face,—but you have acted on the whole
Most nobly, and I own it from my soul.

Don Juan.

VALLEE DES VAUX.*

Air—The Meeting of the Waters.

If I dream of the past, at fair Fancy's command,
 Up-floats from the blue sea thy small sunny land !
 O'er thy green hills, sweet Jersey, the fresh breezes blow,
 And silent and warm is thy Vallée des Vaux !

There alone have I loitered 'mid blossoms of gold,
 And forgot that the great world was crowded and cold,
 Nor believed that a land of enchantment could show
 A vale more divine than the Vallée des Vaux.

A few little white cots, calm as clouds in the sky,
 Or as still sails at sea, when the light breezes die,
 And a mill with its wheel in the brook's silver glow
 Form thy beautiful hamlet, sweet Vallée des Vaux !

As the brook prattled by like an infant at play,
 And each wave as it passed stole a moment away,
 I thought how serenely a long life would flow,
 By the sweet little brook in the Vallée des Vaux.

VIEW OF CALCUTTA.

HERE Passion's restless eye and spirit rude
 May greet no kindred images of power
 To fear or wonder ministrant.—No tower,
 Time-struck and tenantless, here seems to brood,
 In the dread majesty of solitude,
 O'er human pride departed—no rocks lower
 O'er ravenous billows—no vast hollow wood
 Rings with the lion's thunder—no dark bower
 The crouching tiger haunts—no gloomy cave
 Glitters with savage eyes ! But all the scene
 Is calm and cheerful. At the mild command
 Of Britain's sons, the skilful and the brave,
 Fair palace-structures decorate the land,
 And proud ships float on Hooghly's breast serene !

* Valley of Vallies.

LINES TO A SKYLARK.

WANDERER through the wilds of air !
 Freely as an angel fair
 Thou dost leave the solid earth,
 Man is bound to from his birth.
 Scarce a cubit from the grass
 Springs the foot of lightest lass—
Thou upon a cloud can'st leap,
 And o'er broadest rivers sweep,
 Climb up heaven's steepest height,
 Fluttering, twinkling, in the light ;
 Soaring, singing ; till, sweet bird,
 Thou art neither seen nor heard,
 Lost in azure fields afar
 Like a distance-hidden star,
 That alone for angels bright
 Breathes its music, sheds its light.

Warbler of the morning's mirth !
 When the gray mists rise from earth,
 And the round dews on each spray
 Glitter in the golden ray,
 And thy wild notes, sweet though high,
 Fill the wide cerulean sky,
 Is there human heart or brain
 Can resist thy merry strain ?
 But not always soaring high,
 Making man up-turn his eye
 Just to learn what shape of love,
 Raineth music from above ;—
 All the sunny cloudlets fair
 Floating on the azure air,
 All the glories of the sky
 Thou leavest unreluctantly,
 Silently with happy breast
 To drop into thy lowly nest.

Though the frame of man must be
 Bound to earth, the soul is free ;
 But that freedom oft doth bring
 Discontent and sorrowing.
 Oh ! that from each waking vision,
 Gorgeous vista, gleam Elysian,

From ambition's dizzy height,
 And from hope's illusive light,
 Man, like thee, glad lark, could brook
 Upon a low green spot to look,
 And with home-affections blest
 Sink into as calm a nest !

SONNETS—WRITTEN AT SEA.

[FINE WEATHER.]

THE plain of ocean 'neath the crystal air
 Its azure bound extends—the circle wide
 Is sharply clear,—contrasted hues divide
 The sky and water. Clouds, like hills that wear
 The winter's snow-wrought mantle, brightly fair,
 Rest on the main's blue marge. As shadows glide
 O'er dew-decked fields, the calm ship seems to slide
 O'er glassy paths that catch the noon-tide glare
 As if bestrown with diamonds. Quickly play
 The small crisp waves that musically break
 Their shining peaks.—And now, if aught can make
 Celestial spirits downward wing their way,
 Methinks they glitter in the proud sun's wake
 And breathe a glorious beauty on the day !

[A CALM, AFTER A GALE.]

Like mountain-mists that roll on sultry airs,
 Unheard and slow the huge waves heave around
 That lately roared in wrath. The storm-fiend, bound
 Within his unseen cave, no longer tears
 The vexed and wearied main. The moon appears,
 Uncurtaining wide her azure realms profound
 To cheer the sullen night. Though not a sound
 Reposing Nature breathes, my rapt soul hears
 The far-off murmur of my native streams
 Like music from the stars—the silver tone
 Is memory's lingering echo. Ocean's zone
 Infolds me from the past ;—this small bark seems
 The centre of a world—an island lone ;
 And home's dear forms are like departed dreams !

SONNETS.

I.

THE breast that would not feel this calm profound,
 The eye that would not love this landscape fair,
 Though in their mortal make beyond compare,
 In spiritual life were senseless and unsound.
 This glassy lake—the silent hills around—
 The western clouds where rests, like woven air,
 In tresses wild, the day-god's golden hair—
 All seem in sleep's divine enchantment bound.
 Nor brute nor human form, nor cot nor cave,
 Nor palace proud, nor sign nor sound of life
 Is seen or heard ; not lonelier is the grave ;
 And yet this lovely solitude is rife
 With food for living thought, and few would crave
 A holier refuge from the loud world's strife.

II.

But, ah ! no scene of loveliness may last !
 The earth is all mutation. Sunny skies—
 The meadows gay—the sleeping lake that lies
 A broad bright sheet of gold—are soon o'ercast.
 O'er all these silent hills loud gales have past,
 And ere long shall return. The gorgeous dyes
 Of sun-set clouds,—the calm night's countless eyes,—
 Shall vanish at the rude storm's trumpet-blast.
 'Tis thus too with the soul. Eternal change
 Of mood and passion seems her lot below ;
 Nature and man with kindred movement range
 From fair to foul, from happiness to woe,
 Again to light and joy—reversion strange—
 And nought a long monotony may know.

III.

Yet well and wisely hath the poet said,
 That "all exists by elemental strife,
 And passions are the elements of life.*"
 This moving world were as a dreamless bed—
 Grave of the living—if stagnation dread
 Held in its base enthrallment Nature's realm,
 And man's unslumbering soul. Though storms o'erwhelm
 Life's scene awhile, eternal stillness dead
 Were heavier fate for human heart to bear.
 We know not what we ask ; but, blind and weak,
 Madly neglect the blessings that we share,
 And hidden evils ignorantly seek.
 Oh ! if his own fixed fate could man bespeak
 How oft for change would rise the impatient prayer !

SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS.

ON THEIR POETICAL MERITS, AND ON THE QUESTION OF TO
WHOM ARE THEY ADDRESSED ?*

AT a time when our elder poets are so much studied, and so justly admired, it seems not a little extraordinary that the sonnets of the immortal Shakespeare should be almost utterly neglected. When alluded to, as they rarely are, by modern critics, it is generally to echo the flippant insolence of Steevens, who asserted that nothing short of the strongest Act of Parliament could enlist readers into their service. We know, however, that in Shakespeare's life-time, these 'sugred sonnets,' as Meres quaintly calls them, were in great esteem, and were for a long while far better known than many of the plays, which fell into comparative disrepute for some time before the author's death, and were not published in a collected form until several years after. Only eleven of the dramas were printed during the poet's life. Shakespeare died (on his birth-day, April 23,) in 1616. The first complete edition was printed in 1623, and was the joint speculation of four booksellers ; a circumstance from which Malone infers, that no single publisher was at the time willing to risk his money on an entire collection of the plays.

A bookseller of the name of Jaggard did not hesitate to publish, on his own account, in 1599, the sonnets which appear under the title of "*The Passionate Pilgrim*," even in defiance of the author, or at all events without consulting his wishes. The collection was so inaccurate and made with so little care, that Marlowe's madrigal, "*Come live with me, &c.*," was included in it as the production of Shakespeare. The unpopularity of Shakespeare's dramatic works, during even the greater part of the 17th century, is another illustration, to be added to a thousand others, of the capriciousness of the public taste. In one hundred years were published only four editions of his plays, and now, perhaps, next to the Bible, the exclusive copyright of these works would be more valuable than that of any other publication that has yet appeared.

When we reflect upon the manner in which the plays have been subjected to the fickleness of the public mind, we ought perhaps to be less surprised at the fate of the sonnets. There are also certain considerations connected with the lat-

* "An almost impenetrable darkness rests on the question, and no effort has hitherto, in the smallest degree, tended to disperse the gloom."—*Drake*.

ter, which may render their present unpopularity a mystery of more easy solution.

In the first place, we must recollect the equivocal nature of their subject, and, secondly, the unpopular character of the sonnet as a peculiar form of verse. It is true, that at the time of their original publication, the sonnet was a fashionable species of composition, but it forced its way into notice rather from the great reputation of its cultivators, than from its own actual adaptation to the general taste.

Another cause of their neglect may be discovered in the enmity of Steevens, whose arrogant and tasteless criticisms have had a strange influence over succeeding commentators. Alexander Chalmers observes, that "it is perhaps necessary that some notice should be taken of Shakespeare's poems, in an account of his life and writings, although they have never" (which is not true) "been favourites with the public;" but all he ventures to add on so insignificant and unworthy a subject is, that the peremptory decision of Mr. Steevens, on the merits of these poems, severe as it is, only amounts to the general conclusion of modern critics! He has also the audacity to pretend, that it is necessary to offer some apology for inserting the poems of William Shakespeare in his voluminous collection of the British Poets! He is bold enough to assert that there *are* "scattered beauties" in the sonnets, "enough, *it is hoped*, to justify their admission" into the same collection, in which Gorbet, Turbeville, Pitt, Yalden, Hughes, Duke, King, Sprat, Walsh and Pomfret, have each an honourable place!

In most of the critical and biographical notices of Shakespeare, a contemptuous silence is observed on the subject of the sonnets; and indeed the mass of readers, at the present day, are not even aware that Shakespeare is the author of a volume of Miscellaneous Poems. Wordsworth, in one of his prefaces to his own poems, (published in 1815,) announces it as an interesting fact, that such a work is extant, and that it is every way worthy of the illustrious Shakespeare. Dr. Drake, however, is the only writer who has taken up the subject with the enthusiasm which every thing connected with that glorious name is so well calculated to awaken. His indefatigable industry and the genuine love of literature, which he on all occasions exhibits, excite the respect and sympathy of every generous mind. He has contributed more than any other critic with whom I am acquainted to revive these unjustly neglected poems.

A regret has often been expressed that we have little beyond a collection of barren dates in what is called the life of Shakespeare. Now, I conceive, and in this opinion I do not stand

alone, that if any new light is to be thrown on Shakespeare's life and character, it must result from a careful and profound study of these sonnets. Frederic Schlegel has observed, that it is in these pieces we are first introduced to a personal knowledge of the great poet and his feelings. "When he wrote sonnets," he observes, "it seems as if he had considered himself as more of a poet than when he wrote plays; he was the manager of a theatre, and he viewed the drama as his business; on it he exerted all his intellect and power; but when he had feelings intense and secret to express, he had recourse to a form of writing, with which his habits had rendered him familiar. It is strange but delightful to scrutinize, in these short effusions, the character of Shakespeare. For the right understanding of even his dramatic works, these lyrics are of the greatest importance; they show us, that in his dramas he very seldom speaks according to his own thoughts or feelings, but according to his knowledge." This is also the opinion of his celebrated brother, Augustus William Schlegel, and of Dr. Ulrici, and I take up a strong position when I shelter myself under such authorities.* Mr. Thomas Campbell, however, has expressed his surprise that Augustus William Schlegel, "one of the most brilliant and acute spirits of the age," should have made this "erroneous over-estimate of the light derivable from these poems respecting the poet's history." He contends that the facts attested by the sonnets "can be held in a nut-shell," that they do not unequivocally paint the actual situation of the poet, nor make us acquainted with his passions; nor contain any confession of the most remarkable errors of his youthful years. He does not deny that some slight hints of a personal nature may be gathered from a careful perusal, but he considers these to be grossly exaggerated.

Malone and Dr. Drake are of opinion, that the sonnets of Daniel were the prototype of Shakespeare's; and though their observations on this subject are not without weight, I am inclined to think that Shakespeare had studied all the sonnet compositions of his predecessors, without constructing his own after any particular standard. Daniel's system is not peculiar to himself; there were other writers, both

* "It betrayed an extraordinary deficiency of critical acumen in the commentators on Shakespeare, that none of them, as far as we know, have ever thought of availing themselves of his sonnets for tracing the circumstances of his life. These sonnets paint most unequivocally the actual situation and sentiments of the poet; they enable us to become acquainted with the passions of the man; they even contain the most remarkable confessions of his youthful errors!"—*Lectures on Dramatic Literature, by Augustus William Schlegel*. The remarks of Frederic Schlegel are extracted from his *Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern*.

before and after him, who adopted the same form. As to his turn of expression, though in some respects similar to Shakespeare's, it is not more so than that of his other contemporaries. It was the diction and idiom of the age. Shakespeare not being an Italian scholar, and not therefore acquainted with the strict models, chose the system that was most popular at the time, and which was certainly the most easy to construct, and perhaps the most agreeable to his own ear. That the form of three elegiac quatrains, concluding with a couplet, is infinitely less difficult than the Petrarchan sonnet, and is capable of being rendered highly musical and agreeable in skilful hands, no critic would be willing to dispute ; but, strictly speaking, it is not entitled to the name of sonnet. In the legitimate sonnet, the first eight lines should have but two rhymes, and the concluding six lines should have either two or three rhymes arranged alternately. Shakespeare's fourteen-line effusions are very exquisite little poems, but they are not sonnets, and I only call them such to distinguish them from his longer pieces, and because they are generally recognized by that title.

Some writers have a ridiculous habit of calling every short poem a sonnet, without reference to its precise number of lines or its general construction. They might just as well call a didactic poem an ode ; a blank-verse poem a song ; or an elegy an epigram. It is uncritical and injudicious to confound the different orders of verse by inappropriate titles.

Many people disapprove entirely of the system of the sonnet as too arbitrary and confined, and compare it to the bed of Procrustes,* which the limbs of the victims laid thereon were made to fit by being either stretched or amputated, as the case required. They object to its being limited to a precise number of lines ; as if the same objection might not be made to every other form of verse. The sonnet is one stanza of fourteen lines as the Spenserian measure is one stanza of nine lines. Some poems have been constructed entirely of sonnet-stanzas.† Though the Spenserian stanza is much shorter, it is generally complete in itself, and the sound and sense are wound up together by the concluding Alexandrine, in a way that fully satisfies both the ear and the mind. Even in eight and four-line stanzas there is usually a certain unity and com-

* It was Ben Jonson who first made use of this now stale comparison : "He cursed Petrarch for redacting verses into Sonnets, which he said was like that tyrant's bed, where some who were too short were racked, others too long cut short." But Ben Jonson's taste was not infallible. According to Drummond's report of his conversation "Spenser's stanzas pleased him not, nor his matter," while, "for some things, he esteemed Donne the first poet in the world."

† Spenser's "*Ruines of Rome*," and "*Visions of Petrarch*," &c., are examples.

pleteness both of thought and music. These laws of verse are not arbitrary or casual, but depend on certain fixed principles, discovered by the intuitive taste and discrimination of genius. Capel Loft has ingeniously insisted on the perfection of the sonnet construction, and its analogy to music; and has remarked that it is somewhat curious that the two Guidi or Guitttoni, both of Arrezzo, the birth-place of Petrarch, were the fathers, the one of the sonnet, and the other of the modern system of musical *notation* and *solmization*. He has proved, at least to my satisfaction, that the sonnet is as complete and beautiful a form of verse as any that has been yet invented. I of course allude to the strict Petrarchan or Guidonian sonnet. The little poems of Bowles and Charlotte Smith are merely elegiac four-line stanzas, with a concluding couplet; and though very pretty and pleasing compositions, possess not the charm which they would have acquired by a more rigid adherence to the Italian model. Of later years a more intimate acquaintance with Italian literature has opened the eyes of our poets to the superior beauty of the legitimate construction. The true Italian sonnet is a labyrinth of sweet sounds. It has all the variety of blank-verse, with the additional charm of rhyme. There is no precise limit to the number or position of the pauses, and the lines may so run over into each other, that the cloying effect of a too frequent and palpable recurrence of the same terminations need never be experienced, if the poet turn his skill and taste to a proper account. The sonnet is not adapted to all subjects, but to those only which may be treated in a small compass. A single sentiment or principle may be expressed or illustrated within its narrow limits with exquisite and powerful effect, but it is not adapted for continuous feeling or complex thought. Pastorini's celebrated sonnet to Genoa, and the equally celebrated sonnet to Italy, by Filicaja, are examples of the capability of the sonnet to give effect to a single burst of feeling or to one pervading idea, suggested by a single scene, or circumstance. Wordsworth has written a vast number of sonnets in the legitimate form, and though too many of them are verbose and deficient in unity and point, he has produced several perfect specimens of the force and unity of this species of composition. I content myself with adducing one beautiful example.

SONNET.

COMPOSED ON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

EARTH has not any thing to show more fair :
 Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
 A sight so touching in its majesty ;
 This city now doth like a garment wear

The beauty of the morning ; silent, bare,
 Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
 Open unto the fields and to the sky ;
 All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
 Never did sun more beautifully steep
 In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill ;
 Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep ;
 The river glideth at his own sweet will ;
 Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep,
And all that mighty heart is lying still !

The reader feels as this fine sonnet is wound up with the sublime concluding image, that there is no want of an additional line or an additional illustration. Both the ear and mind are satisfied. The music of thought and the music of verse are exquisitely blended, and seem to arrive together at a natural termination. It reminds me of the Portuguese aphorism, that the sonnet ought to be shut with a golden key. The Italians say that it should be a body of sweetness with a sting, by which they do not mean that its tenderness or beauty should merge into an actual epigram, but that it should end with point and spirit. When a sonnet fails to exhibit a unity and finish, it is the fault of the artist. The question put by George Steevens, in allusion to Shakespeare's sonnets of "*what have truth and nature to do with sonnets?*" is scarcely worthy of an answer. Truth and nature are not confined to any particular form of verse, and may be as well embodied in the fourteen-line stanza as in any other ; they depend on the poet's genius, and not on his choice of metre.

It is true that the sonnet imposes many peculiar difficulties on the poet, but it is his glory to overcome them ; and we do not find that bad sonnets necessarily contain more nonsense than fourteen lines of bad blank verse.*

But it is time to draw the reader's especial attention to the sonnets (for such I must call them) of Shakespeare. If I regret their defects as *sonnets*, the truly Shakesperian beauties, with which they are so profusely sprinkled, make me delight in them as *poems*, without any reference to their

* In the notice of Robert Walpole's poetical translations from the Greek, Spanish, and Italian, in the *Edinburgh Review*, (1805), it is observed that "This species of composition has been called by an excellent writer, *the most exquisite jewel of the Muses*. With us it has never been completely naturalized. Milton and Gray, who have cultivated it with most success, both drank from the sweet streams of Italy, where a single sonnet can give immortality to its author, while the longer poems of his contemporaries are buried in oblivion." In adding that the strict laws of the sonnet ought not to be departed from, the reviewer remarks, "*Gray has observed them scrupulously.*" I cannot understand this prominent notice of Gray as a sonnet-writer. *He wrote only one*, and even that is omitted in Chalmers' collection ! Though a good sonnet, its excellence is by no means extraordinary. Milton's sonnets are unquestionably the best in our language, and possess a severe dignity that may be referred to as a triumphant disproof of the vulgar notion, that this form of verse is necessarily confined to ingenious conceits or maudlin sentiment.

peculiar class or construction. I shall commence with pointing out what I conceive to be specimens of their poetical merit, and shall afterwards proceed to offer some observations upon the difficult question of *to whom are they addressed*, which seems to have turned the heads of some of the poet's commentators.

Mr. Steevens has asserted, that "*the sonnets are composed in the highest strain of affectation, pedantry, circumlocution, and nonsense.*"

Now I shall endeavour to make the reader acquainted with the real nature of the poetry thus spoken of, and then leave him to his indignation and astonishment at such critical blasphemy in one who set himself up as a commentator on Shakespeare and a pretender to taste. Leigh Hunt has well described Steevens as "an acute observer up to a certain point, but who could write like an idiot when he got beyond it." As the chief merit of Shakespeare's fourteen-line stanzas does not consist in their continuity or completeness, but in the freshness, force, beauty and abundance of the thoughts and images, I shall not confine my extracts to entire sonnets, but give occasionally such detached lines and short passages as seem most remarkable, and may be most easily separated from the context. I commence, however, with a complete poem, in which the writer persuades his friend to marry :—

"When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,
Will be a tattered weed of small worth held.
Then being asked where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days ;
To say within thine own deep sunken eyes,
Were an all-eating shame and thriftless praise.
How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use,
If thou couldst answer—'This fair child of mine
Shall sum my count, and make my old excuse—'
Proving his beauty by succession thine.
This were to be new-made when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold."

The following lines, in which the same subject is continued, contain one of those vivid images that are flashed from the fancy of the genuine poet only :—

"Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her ~~prime~~ ^{prime} :
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time."

The ensuing extract has also much beauty :—

"Those hours that with gentle work did frame
The lovely face where every eye doth dwell,
Will play the tyrant to the very same,
And that unfair which fairly doth excel ;
For never-resting Time leads summer on
To hideous winter."

Where in any modern poem may we look for such a description of sun-rise as the following? There is a freshness of imagery, a masculine simplicity and strength of diction, and a noble freedom of versification, in this passage, that could hardly be over-praised :—

“Lo, in the orient when the gracious light
Lifts up his burning head, each under eye
Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,
Serving with looks his sacred majesty ;
And having climbed the steep-up heavenly hill,
Resembling strong youth in his middle age,
Yet mortal looks adore his beauty still
Attending on his golden pilgrimage.”

Scarcely less beautiful are the following lines :—

“When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night ;
When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls all silvered o’er with white ;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And summer’s green all girded up in sheaves,
Borne on the bier, with white and bristly beard ;
Then of thy beauty do I question make—
That thou among the wastes of time must go !”

There is a tenderness of feeling in the following sonnet, that must touch the coldest reader :—

“That time of year thou may’st in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang,
Upon those boughs that shake against the cold
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and bye black night doth take away,
Death’s second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it doth expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceiv’st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well, which thou must leave e’er long.”

There is much grace and ingenuity in the following apology for his long silence. The line in *Italics* is truly exquisite :—

“My love is strengthened, though more weak in seeming,
I love not less, though less the show appear :
That love is merchandized, whose rich esteeming
The owner’s *tongue* doth publish every where.
Our love was new, and then but in its spring,
When I was wont to greet it with my lays ;
As Philomel in summer’s front doth sing,
And stops his pipe in growth of riper days.
Not that the summer is less pleasant now
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,
But that wild music bartheus every bough
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
Therefore, like her, I sometimes hold my tongue,
Because I would not dull you with my song.”

We cite the first two lines of the sonnet to Time for the sake of both their imagery and their harmony.

TO TIME.

"Oh ! carve not with thine hours my love's fair brow,
Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen."

The pathos and melody of the ensuing sonnet will be immediately acknowledged by every reader of taste and sensibility :—

"No longer mourn for me when I am dead,
Than you shall hear the sullen surly bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell ;
Nay if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it ; for I love you so,
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O if (I say) you look upon this verse,
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse ;
But let your love c'en with my life decay :
Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
And mock you with me after I am gone."

The following sonnet is thoroughly Shakesperian .—

"Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
Fooled by those rebel powers, that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within, and suffer dearth,
Painting the outward walls so costly gay ?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend ?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge ? Is this thy body's end ?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store :
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross ;
Within be fed, without be rich no more .
So shalt thou feed on death, that feeds on men,
And, death once dead, there's no more dying then."

The next brief extract, in which the poet expresses his willingness to bear all the blame of his forced separation from his friend, is very touching. There is great force in the line in *Italics* :—

"Knowing thy will,
I will acquaintance strangle, and look strange ;*
Be absent from thy walks ; and on my tongue
Thy sweet beloved name no more shall dwell,
Lest I (too much profane) should do it wrong,
And haply of our old acquaintance tell."

* "Steevens says, this uncouth phrase seems to have been a favourite with Shakespeare ! "Why is any word called *uncouth*, which expresses a meaning more clearly and forcibly than any other word"—*Knight*.

There is a freshness and beauty as of vernal breezes and blue skies in the first half of the following sonnet :—

“ From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dressed in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing
That heavy Saturn laughed and leaped with him.
Yet nor the lays of bird, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew :
Nor did I wonder at the lilies white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose :
They were but sweet sweet figures of delight,
Drawn after you, your pattern of all those ;
Yet seemed it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play.”

The commencement of the next sonnet is a fine burst of poetry, and is characterized by that easy force of style, and exuberance of fancy, and that almost miraculous felicity of diction which seem peculiar to this mighty genius. His descriptions of morning come upon us like the dawn itself :—

“ Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy ;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack* on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace :
E'en so my sun one early morn did shine
With all triumphant splendour on my brow ;
But out ! alack ! he was but one hour mine ;
The region cloud both masked him from me now,
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth ;
Suns of the world may stain,† when Heaven's sun staineth.‡

I will now throw together, in a heap, a number of small gems from these too long neglected sonnets, and let the reader make his own comments on their beauty :—

“ Like as the waves make to the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end.”

“ Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread
But as the marigold at the sun's eye :
And in themselves their pride lies buried,
For at a frown they in their glory die.”

“ So flatter I the swart-complexioned night.”

“ Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear,
Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste :
The vacant leaves thy mind's imprint will bear,
And of this book this learning may'st thou taste,

* Vapour.

† May be stained.

‡ Is stained.

The wrinkles which thy glass will truly show,
Of mouthed graves will give thee memory ;
Thou by thy dial's shady stealth may'st know
Time's thievish progress to eternity."

" Three winters cold
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride ;
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turned ;
In process of the seasons have I seen,
'Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned,
Since first I saw you."

" And truly not the morning sun of heaven
Better becomes the grey cheeks of the East,
Nor that full star that ushers in the even
Doth half that glory to the sober west,
As those two mourning eyes become thy face."

" () call not me to justify the wrong,
That thy unkindness lays upon my heart ;
Wound me not with thine eye, but with thy tongue."

" Ah ! do not when my heart hath 'scaped this sorrow
Come in the rearward of a conquered woe."

" *Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye,*
'Gainst which the world can ne'er hold argument," &c.

Those persons to whom I may have the good fortune to introduce Shakespeare as a sonnet-writer, will feel no little surprise at the extreme elegance and accuracy of his verse. There is an occasional smartness, terseness and antithesis in many of his poems, that people are apt to consider peculiar to later writers. There is a balanced harmony, a point and opposition, in the following couplets, that have not been excelled by Pope or Darwin. And yet they were written *upwards of two centuries ago!*

" The worth of that, is that which it contains,
And that is this, and this with thee remains.

I am to wait, though waiting so, be hell ;
Not blame your pleasure, be it ill or well.

For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds ;
Lilies that fester, smell far worse than weeds.*

For we, that now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

But thence I learn, and find the lesson true,
Drugs poison him, that so feel sick of you.

Him have I lost ; thou hast both him and me ;
He plays the whole, and yet I am not free.

* This line occurs also, word for word, as Knight has pointed out, in a play which was attributed to Shakespeare.—*The Reign of King Edward III.*

For I have sworn thee fair ; more perjured I,
To swear, against the truth, so foul a lie.

Come there for cure, and this by that I prove
Love's fire heats water, water cools not love.

Blessed are you, whose worthiness gives scope
Being had, to triumph, being lacked, to hope."

But though the sonnets abound in examples of truly artistic verse, they are even excelled in this respect by the same author's *Venus and Adonis*, "the first heir of his invention." The subject of that poem is not a happy one, and the very slight thread of story is, according to the fashion of his day, extended to a length that must try the patience of most modern readers ; but after all the supposed improvements in the art of versification, the best poets of these times might be safely challenged to show in what respect they could surpass the metrical construction of the following stanzas :—

Once more the ruby-colored portal opened,
Which to his speech did honey passage yield ;
Like a red morn, that ever yet betokened
Wreck to the seaman, tempest to the field,
Sorrow to shepherds, woe unto the birds,
Gnats and foul flaws to herdsmen and to herds.

The night of sorrow now is turned to day ;
The two blue windows faintly she upheaveth,
Like the fair sun when in his fresh array
He cheers the morn, and all the world relieveth ;
And as the bright sun glorifies the sky,
So is her face illumined with her eye.

Lo ! here the gentle lark, weary of rest,
From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,
And wakes the morning from whose silver breast
The sun ariseth in his majesty ;
Who doth the world so gloriously behold,
That cedar tops and hills seem burnished gold.

She looks upon his lips, and they are pale ;
She takes him by the hand, and that is cold ;
She whispers in his ears a heavy tale,
As if they heard the woeful words she told :
She lifts the coffer-lids that close his eyes,
When lo ! two lamps, burnt out, in darkness lies :*

* This grammatical inaccuracy, as Malone rightly observes, may often be found in the pages of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Malone gives these examples from the plays :—

His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that *bee*.

Cymbeline.

— There *lies*
Two kinsmen digged their graves with weeping eyes.

King Richard II.

We quote the stanzas not as specimens of good grammar, but of easy, energetic, compact and polished verse.

Two glasses, where herself herself beheld
 A thousand times, and now no more reflect ;
 Their virtue lost, wherein they late excelled,
 And every beauty robbed of his effect :
 Wonder of time, quoth she, this is my spite
 That you being dead, the day should yet be light.

Since thou art dead, lo ! here I prophesy,
 Sorrow on love hereafter shall attend :
 It shall be waited on with jealousy,
 Find sweet beginning but unsavoury end ;
 Ne'er settled equally, but high or low ;
 That all love's pleasure shall not match his woe.

It shall be fickle, false, and full of fraud ;
 Bud and be blasted in a breathing-while ;
 The bottom poison, and the top o'er-strawed*
 With sweets, that shall the truest sight beguile :
 The strongest body shall it make most weak,
 Strike the wise dumb, and teach the fool to speak.

It shall be sparing, and too full of riot,
 Teaching decrepit age to tread the measures ; †
 The staring ruffian shall it keep in quiet,
 Pluck down the rich, enrich the poor with treasures ;
 It shall be raging-mad, and silly-wild,
 Make the young old, the old become a child.

It shall suspect, where is no cause of fear ;
 It shall not fear, where it should most mistrust ;
 It shall be merciful, and too severe,
 And most deceiving, when it seems most just ;
 Perverse it shall be, where it shows most toward,
 Put fear to valour, courage to the coward.

It shall be cause of war, and dire events,
 And set dissension 'twixt the son and sire ;
 Subject and servile to all discontents,
 As dry combustions matter is to fire ;
 Sith in his prime, death doth my love destroy,
 They that love best, their loves shall not enjoy.

After these specimens, to which I could add a thousand others, Johnson's talk about the rude state of English versification before the time of Waller is worse than foolish. It was disgraceful in a writer who set himself up as the historian of poetry and poets, to speak of the age of Shakespeare in the way he has done.

I have as yet confined myself to a consideration of the poetical merits of the Sonnets, but though I do not propose to enter fully into the question at present, I cannot help subjoining a few passages to support Schlegel's position, that much of the poet's personal history and private feeling is revealed in these condemned and neglected poems.

* To *straw* (for to *strew*) frequently occurs in our translation of the Scriptures.
 —Boswell.

† To dance.

The following lines contain an affecting allusion to his profession as an actor, an acknowledgment of his follies, which he no doubt rightly attributes to the influence of his unfortunate circumstances, and an intimation of profound repentance. Pope has observed that "Shakespeare was obliged to please the lowest of the people, and to keep the worst of company." Chalmers replies to this, that we have nothing but Pope's conjecture on the subject. Now, if Chalmers had only judged for himself, and had not turned from Shakespeare's poems with disdain, because they were not good enough for Mr. Steevens,* he might have met with the ensuing passage, which would have convinced him that Pope was correct in his assertion :—

"O, for my sake do you with fortune chide,
The gnilly goddess for my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my lie provide,
Than *public means*, which *public manners* breeds :
Thence comes it that my name received a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it *works in* like the *dyer's hand*."

It has been erroneously asserted by many writers on Shakespeare, that he was not conscious of his mighty faculties, and had no anticipation of his future fame. There are numerous passages that are characterised by a vivid consciousness of his immortality. The following lines bear unanswerably on the point :—

"Nor shall Death brag thou wanderest in his shade,
When in *eternal lines* to time thou growest :
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee,"

And let me add one more example :—

"*Not marble nor the gilded monuments*
Of princes shall out-live this powerful rhyme."

Some of the sonnets, however, that appear to have been written in his youth, and before he had gained his reputa-

* A very popular author, distinguished for his knowledge of literary history, did me the honour to read this article in the first edition of the *Literary Leaves*, and in an interesting and most obliging private letter, he communicated the following characteristic notice of Steevens :—

"These sonnets have had a singular fate since Steevens declared that nothing short of an act of Parliament was necessary to compel us to read them, and he boldly, as impudently, rejected them from the works of Shakespeare. As Steevens was not deficient in critical judgment, and was a malicious wag, whenever he had his friend and rival Malone in view, this false and ridiculous decision may have been only one of the many unfair tricks or traps which he laid to catch his brother commentator. Boswell told me of several which had only originated in this mischievous Puck, who, when he had beguiled some innocent into the mire, always screamed in laughter."

tion, are as full of graceful humility and a reverential regard for others, as his later productions are of a just and noble confidence in his own pretensions.

"If thou survive my well contented day,
When that churl death my bones with dust shall cover,
And shalt by fortune once more re-survey
These *poor rude lines* of thy deceased lover ;
Compare them with the bettering of the time,
And though they be *outstripped by every pen*,
Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme,
Exceeded by the height of happier men."

"O ! how I faint when I of you do write,
Knowing a *better spirit* doth use your name."

This "*better spirit*" is supposed by some to be Spenser ; but though Spenser is also alluded to by name in the *Passionate Pilgrim*, and with great praise,* "*the better spirit*" is thought by other critics, and not without reason, to be Daniel, who had then a high reputation.

Leigh Hunt thinks that we may gather from the sonnets that Shakespeare was lame.† I suppose he alludes to the following passage ; but it is perhaps doubtful whether it should be interpreted literally or not :—

"As a decrepit father takes delight
To see his active child do deeds of youth,
So I, made lame by fortune's dearest spite,
Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth ;
For whether beauty, birth, or wealth or wit,
Or any of these all, or all, or more,
Entitled in my parts do crowned sit,
I make my love engrafted to thy store :
So then I am not lame, poor, nor despised."

There is a passage in another sonnet of a similar description to the third line of the above extract :—

"Say that thou did'st forsake me for some fault,
And I will comment upon that offence :
Speak of my lameness, and I straight will halt,
Against thy reasons making no defence."

* Dowland to me is dear, whose heavenly touch,
Upon the lute doth ravish human sense ;
Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such
As passing all conceit needs no defence.

Sonnet VI. *Passionate Pilgrim*.

† How many poets and poetesses have been lame!—Tyrtæus—Shakespeare—Akenside—Darwin—Anna Seward—Mrs. Robinson—Scott—Byron—Pringle, &c. &c. &c.

Mr. C. A. Brown denies that Shakespeare was lame. Had he been "a halting fellow," how asks Mr. Brown, could he have played the part of the ghost in Hamlet? The story, he conjectures, "rests upon some matter-of-fact gentlemen who could not comprehend a metaphor." Leigh Hunt would smile at being included in the list of these matter-of-fact gentlemen.

Sir Walter Scott introduces Shakespeare into his romance of *Kenilworth* with an allusion to his lameness :—" He is a stout man at quarter staff, and single falchion, though, as I am told, a *halting* fellow."

The fortieth sonnet shows that he was accustomed to travel on horseback, and that when vexed by his steed's dulness, notwithstanding his own sweetness and gentleness of nature, he could not help "provoking him on" with "the bloody spur,"

" That sometimes anger thrust into his hide."

He adds, however, that the groan of the poor animal was

" More sharp to me than spurring to his side."

These sonnets also prove that he was a warm friend and a passionate lover. Indeed, considering that he was a married man, and a father, it must be confessed that his extravagant love for a notoriously low and licentious woman (Campbell calls her a *married* woman, though I recollect no passage in the sonnets that exactly justifies him in so describing her), certainly throws a shade upon his moral character. His thinking it necessary to publish and immortalize the matter, makes it a thousand times worse.

Shakespeare married at eighteen. His wife was eight years older. It is supposed that she did not contribute to his domestic happiness.* One of his biographers imagines that he was *jealous*; but this is scarcely probable, I think, considering that he did not take his wife with him to London, but lived at a distance from her for many years. It is certain, that he neglected her in his will, in which her name was at first wholly omitted, and subsequently inserted with the bequest of only "*his second best bed*." That he was unfaithful to her, is, I fear, pretty clearly proved by some of these confessional sonnets, which seem to correspond in their character with a scandalous anecdote lately discovered by Mr. Payne Collier. Burbidge, the actor, while playing Richard the Third, struck the fancy of a fair citizen, who appointed him to call upon her under the name of Richard the Third. Shakespeare overheard the assignation, and forestalled poor Burbidge. When the latter arrived and sent in his name, Shakespeare sent word back that *William the Conqueror* was before Richard the Third. He was suspected of the paternity of Davenant, and when the latter was telling some one that he

* I believe Thomas Campbell in his edition of Shakespeare's plays, in one volume, has stated that the dramatic bard's first child was born six months after his marriage with Anne Hathaway.

was going to his *God-father* Shakespeare, he was cautioned not to take *God's* name in vain. Such gossiping and doubtful anecdotes as these, are perhaps scarcely worth repeating: but such is our eager interest in the slightest details connected with Shakespeare, that we cannot help treating them with more consideration sometimes than they really merit.

I now come to the consideration of the question of *to whom are these sonnets addressed*; a mystery which has puzzled the critics as much as that of the authorship of *Junius*. Hazlitt acknowledges, in his occasionally familiar way, that of the "ultimate drift" of the sonnets, he can "make neither head nor tail." Thomas Campbell is also puzzled, and remarks that it seems almost impossible to make out to whom they are addressed. Even the Schlegels have not attempted, I believe, to settle this point, though so indignant at the contemptuous neglect with which the sonnets have been treated by the poet's various biographers. The question might seem of less importance if it were not for the very peculiar character of several of these little poems, which from the want of some positive information in this respect are perfect riddles. It is well known that the smaller collection of sonnets and other short lyrical pieces, which first appeared in 1599, was published by an ignorant and unprincipled bookseller of the name of Jaggard, without the author's sanction. In a public letter of Thomas Heywood's to his own bookseller, Mr. Nicholas Okes, he alludes to this surreptitious publication, and observes, "The author, I know, is much offended with M. Jaggard, that (altogether unknown to him) presumed to make so bold with his name." Now, though we have no direct evidence that the larger collection of sonnets, respecting the object of which there has been so much conjectural criticism, was also published in defiance or without the knowledge of the author, I cannot help thinking there is very good reason for supposing this to have been the case, when we consider the imperfect and unsatisfactory manner in which the work was edited. The poems of *Venus and Adonis*, ("the first heir of his invention,") published in 1593, and *The Rape of Lucrece*, published in 1594, were evidently prepared for the press by the author, who dedicated both of them to his celebrated patron, the Earl of Southampton; but it is difficult to imagine that Shakespeare himself had any thing to do with the first edition of the larger collection of sonnets, which are dedicated with singular inelegance and ambiguity by the publisher to no one knows whom. It is strange that no critic (at least none with whom I am acquainted) has looked upon the publication in this point of view; for though this hypothesis does not enable us to reconcile or explain the

many contradictions and mysteries with which the collection abounds as it now stands, yet it is reasonable in itself, and suggests the justice and propriety of our attributing much that is confused or objectionable in the selection and arrangement of the contents to a want of judgment in the publisher. The dedication to which I have already alluded is printed as follows, in the first edition :

“ To. The. onlie. begetter. of.
These. insung. Sonnets.
Mr. W. H. all. Happinesse.
And. that. eternitie.
Promised
By.
Our. ever-living. Poet.
Wisheth.
The. well-wishing.
Adventurer. in.
Setting.
Forth.

T. T.”

The commentators have taxed their utmost ingenuity to discover who this W. H. can be. Dr. Farmer supposes that the sonnets are addressed to William Harte, the poet's nephew ; but this has since been discovered to be impossible, as he was not born before the year 1600, and the sonnets were published in 1609, and some of them are known to have been written and circulated amongst the author's private friends several years before. Meres praises these “ sugred sonnets ” in his “ Wit's Treasury,” published in 1598. The first seventeen were written to persuade the object of them to marry, and it is absurd to suppose they were addressed to a little child, as Harte must then have been. Besides which, he was of humble birth and pretensions, whereas there are innumerable passages in the sonnets that plainly allude to a patron and friend of distinguished rank and influence. Mr Tyrwhitt once pointed out to Mr. Malone a line in the 20th sonnet, which induced the latter to believe that W. H. stands for William Hughes.

“ A man in *here*, all *Hevs* in his controlling—”

The name of *Hughes* was formerly written *Hevs*. To this person Mr. Malone says that it is probable the first 126 sonnets are addressed, and the remaining 28 to a lady. The play upon the author's own Christian name in the 135th and 143rd sonnets seems in accordance with this notion—

“ Let no unkind, no fair beseeches kill ;
Think all but one, and me in that one Will.”

“ So will I pray that thou may'st have thy Will.”

It may be observed, by the way, that these truly contemptible puns and equivoques in a species of composition that was not addressed to a mixed circle like the author's dramas, of which the occasional bad taste has hitherto been thought an unwilling sacrifice to the "groundlings," seem to prove an early and innate propensity to sins of this description. But no poet is perfect. The 20th sonnet, in which the word *Hews* occurs, is the most puzzling and inexplicable of the whole series. I would extract it entire, if it did not appear objectionable on the score of decency. If I understand it rightly, of which I am very far from being certain, it is in every respect a disgrace to the name of Shakespeare. (*And yet how can we know that it is really his?*)* The reverend Mr. Dyce, the editor of a new edition of these poems, praises Mr. Tyrwhitt's "ingenuity" in the conjectures concerning Mr. Hughes, but without much cause. It is not certain that Shakespeare in this case intends to commit a pun on a name, because the word *hew* in Shakespeare's time, as Dr. Drake observes, meant *mien* and *appearance*, as well as *tint*, and it is possible that the poet is playing on the different meanings. Who is W. Hughes? "A Mr. Hughes," as Mr. Dyce calls him;—he seems created for the occasion. He is a name and nothing else. Is it likely that such a person, of whom no one has heard, was the great patrician patron of our immortal bard? and is it possible that he should have been addressed by Shakespeare in such lines as the following?

"Thou, that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring."

"Against that time, if ever that time come,
When I shall see thee frown on my defects,
When as thy love hath cast his utmost sum,
Called to that audit by *advised respects*;
Against that time, when thou shalt *strangely pass*,
And scarcely greet me with that sun, thine eye;
When love converted from the thing it was,
Shall reasons find of *settled gravity*."

The following passages evidently allude to one who was the observed of all observers, the object of more than one complimentary Muse, and the patron of the learned:—

"So oft have I invoked thee for my muse,
And found such fair assistance in my verse,
As every alien pen hath got my use,
And under thee their poetry disperse."

* It is said that some one has in contemplation to publish a work that shall prove that none of these sonnets are authentic. This would be absurd. The internal evidence in favour of the majority is too strong to be overcome by any ingenuity.

Thine eyes, that taught the dumb on high to sing,
And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,
Have added feathers to the *learned's* wing,
And given grace a double majesty."

"And having thee, of all men's pride I boast."

It is, I think, pretty clear, that "A Mr. Hughes" is not the person who was "all men's pride," and who gave "grace a double majesty." But if Tyrwhitt and Malone fell into the error of giving Shakespeare a patron and a subject somewhat too humble and obscure, Mr. George Chalmers has made a very opposite mistake, and in his anxiety to find a sufficiently dignified object for the poet's praise and gratitude has fixed upon royalty itself. He insists upon it that *the whole series* of sonnets (154) is addressed to Queen Elizabeth? * To those who are familiar with the sonnets, and the palpable indications of many of them being addressed to a *male* object, this opinion seems too ridiculous to be received with any other answer than a laugh. I have gone through the sonnets with great attention, to satisfy myself as to the sex of the object or objects of them, and the following are some of the many passages which I found glaringly opposed to the notion of Mr. Chalmers:—

"Look in thy glass, and tell the face thou viewest,
Now is the time that face should form another;
Whose fresh repair if now thou wilt renewest,
Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother." Son. 3.

"Is it for fear to wet a *widow's* eye
That thou consumest thyself in single life? Son. 9.

—————"Dear my love, you know,
You had a *father*; let your son say so" Son. 13.

"Now stand you on the top of happy hours;
And many *maiden* garlands yet unset,
With virtuous wish *would bear you living flowers*." Son. 16.

"O carve not with thine hours my love's fair brow,
And draw no lines there with thine antique pen;
Him in thy course untainted do allow,
For beauty's pattern to succeeding *men*." Son. 19.

"Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage—" Son. 26.

"The region cloud hath masked *him* from me now,
Yet *him* for this my love no whit disdaineth." Son. 33.

"Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won;
Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assailed;
And when a woman woos, what woman's son
Will sourly leave her till she have prevailed?"

* When Gildon republished the sonnets he specified in the title-page, that they were "all of them in praise of his (Shakespeare's) mistress." Dr. Sewall followed with a similar assertion.—C. A. Brown.

Ah me ! but yet thou mightest, my sweet, forbear,
 And chide thy beauty and thy straying youth,
 Who lead thee in their riot even there
 Where thou art forced to break a two-fold truth ;
Her's by thy beauty tempting *her* to thee,
 Thine, by thy beauty being false to me." Son. 41.

" *Beauteous and lovely youth,*
 When that shall fade, my verse distills your truth." Son. 44.

" *His* beauty shall in these black lines be seen." Son. 63.

" Ah ! wherefore with imperfection should he lieve,
 And with *his* presence grace impiety,
 That sin by *him* advantage should achieve,
 And lace itself with *his* society ?" Son. 67.

" Thus is *his* cheek the map of outworn day." Son. 68.

" Nothing, *sweet boy*, &c." Son. 108.

" O ! thou, my *lovely boy*, who in thy power—" Son. 126.

Queen Elizabeth must have been an old woman (about 64) when she was thus addressed by Shakespeare, according to Mr. George Chalmers, as his "*sweet boy* !" The W. H. of the dedication, and the perpetual allusions to a male object, are no obstacles to our critic, who does not even hesitate to *unsex* the Queen for the sake of his ingenious speculation. He supposes that the masculine phrases were addressed to her in her character of sovereign ! Some of the sonnets that have a female object are any thing but complimentary ; and if they were really addressed to Elizabeth, either prove her majesty to have been a base and licentious woman, or William Shakespeare to have been guilty of a gross and malicious libel on a " Virgin Queen."

" In nothing art thou black, save in thy deeds."

" For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
 Who art as black as hell, as dark as night."

" Oh ! how I love what others do abhor."

He calls her also, in different sonnets, " his false plague," his " female evil," his " colored ill," and accuses her of " seducing his friend."

Absurd as is the conjecture of Mr. George Chalmers, there has been no want of mad or careless critics to keep him in countenance. The early editors, Gildon and Sewell, both maintained that the whole collection is addressed to a female !

Some of the commentators have been puzzled by the *amatory* character of the expressions unequivocally applied in

many instances to a male object. But it should be remembered, that in the age of Shakespeare there was very little distinction between the ordinary expressions of love and friendship. The latter frequently bordered on the strongest language of the former. Warton observes, that in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, there were published entire sets of sonnets devoted to the record of a species of tender attachment between male friends, which, though wholly free from any direct impurity of expression or open immodesty of sentiment, would not be tolerated in these days. He alludes, as an instance, to the "*Affectionate Shepherd*" of Richard Barnfield, printed in 1595, in a series of twenty "not inelegant sonnets," which were exceedingly popular. The poet bewails his unsuccessful love for a beautiful youth, in "a strain of the most tender passion, yet with professions of the chastest affection." The meaning attached to the ardent phrases that are now confined to the intercourse of sexual passion, is not to be given by the modern reader to the same expression in some of our elder writers.* It will be generally admitted, however, that the revolution in our language in this respect is a very pleasant and proper one; and it cannot be denied that in too much of the poetry of the 15th and 16th centuries the effect of great originality, force, and beauty of imagery and thought is often injured by the disagreeable feeling, bordering on disgust, with which we encounter expressions, that however customary and decorous in the olden time, have acquired an air of indelicacy in consequence of the great change that has since occurred in their meaning and their mode of application.

Dr. Drake has entered into a very elaborate, and certainly a very ingenious and plausible disquisition, to prove that the first 126 of the sonnets are addressed to Lord Southampton.† I think, however, that I have discovered various reasonable objections to this hypothesis. The first seventeen sonnets, which so strongly urge the poet's friend to marry, could scarcely have been addressed to Lord Southampton, because that nobleman, then not quite 22 years of age, assiduously courted Mrs. Vernon in 1595 (about fourteen years before the sonnets were published, and

* Being the bosom lover of my lord
Must needs be like my lord.

Portia—in the Merchant of Venice.

Sirrah, there are some of my fellows mightily enamoured of thee.—*The Case is Altered.*

† He proposes to reverse the initials W. H. and make them stand for Henry Wriothesly, Earl of Southampton.

three years before they were alluded to by Meres* as being in private circulation amongst the poet's friends,) and he married her (his marriage having been delayed by the interference of Queen Elizabeth) in 1599. In the next place almost the only praise bestowed on the object of these sonnets is that of extraordinary beauty, and I do not recollect that Lord Southampton has been celebrated for the wonderful perfection of his face or person, though if his portrait in Malone's Shakespeare be authentic, he was not uncomely.† His wit and learning, however, are indisputable, and were warmly eulogized by Chapman, Brothwate, Nash, and other contemporary writers; but throughout the 126 sonnets, supposed to be dedicated to his merits, it is remarkable that there are but two allusions to any mental qualities.

The first of the following quotations almost implies a want of mind, or at all events that the world gave the object of the sonnet no credit for mental endowments, though his personal beauty was generally admitted :—

“ Those parts of thee that the world's eye doth view,
Want nothing that the thoughts of hearts can mend :
All tongues (the voice of soul) give thee that due,
Uttering bare truth, even so as fœces commend.
Thy outward, thus with outward praise is crowned ;
But those same tongues that give thee so thine own,
In other accents do this praise confound ;
By seeing farther than the eye hath shown,
They look into the beauty of thy mind,
And that, in guess, they measure by thy deeds ;
Then (churls) their thoughts, although their eyes were kind,
To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds :
But why thy odour matcheth not thy show,
To solve is this,—that thou dost common grow.” Son. 69.

The next passage, however, is an acknowledgment, though on the part of the poet only, of his possessing mental excellence. He does not hint that this praise will be confirmed by the opinion of others.

“ *Thou art as fair in knowledge as in hue.*” Son. 82.

But even this compliment may have been extorted from the writer, by the reproaches of his friend, who it appears was inordinately fond of praise, and no doubt felt somewhat

* It is possible that Meres may have alluded to the sonnets in the *Passionate Pilgrim* published in 1599. Leigh Hunt has fallen into a mistake, in supposing that the 154 sonnets were not published till after the poet's death.

† His features were at all events masculine, but in the 20th sonnet, the poet exclaims :

“ *A woman's face with nature's own hand painted,*
Just thou, the master-mistress of my passion.”

piqued at the absence of all allusion to the qualities of his mind.

" I never saw that you did painting need,
And therefore to your fair no painting set.
I found, or thought I found, you did exceed
The barren tender of a poet's debt :
And therefore have I slept in your report ;
This silence for my sin you did impute." Son. 83.

" You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,
Being fond of praise." Son. 84.

" Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou knowest thy estimate." Son. 87.

This last line seems to be a strange mode of address to a respected nobleman and the poet's patron ! If the object of the sonnets was intellectually gifted, and it was thought desirable to please and compliment him, it would seem that mental endowments must have been of minor importance in the poet's estimation, and beauty every thing, even in a man. As I observed before, in only two places in 126 sonnets, or 1764 lines, supposed to be devoted to eulogiums on a single male character, is there any allusion to his mind ; while almost every line conveys some compliment to his exterior charms. Had he been distinguished for any other qualification than his pretty looks, I think Shakespeare was not the man to have done injustice to his merits. Even his moral character appears as doubtful as his intellectual.

" 'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
For no man well of such a salve can speak,
That heals the wound, and cures not the *disgrace*,
Nor can thy *shame* give physic to my grief." Son. 34.

In sonnet 35 the poet exhorts him to be no longer grieved at what he has done, for, " roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud ;" and in sonnet 95, he again alludes to his faults, and exclaims,

" O ! what a mansion have those *vices* got
Which for their habitation chose out thee !
Where *beauty's veil* doth cover every blot,
And all things turn to fair, that eyes can see."

Is this the style in which Shakespeare would have addressed his distinguished patron ?

It affords another very strong presumption against the notion that Lord Southampton was the object of so many of these sonnets by the greatest of our English poets, that his remarkable personal bravery, his many and strange duels, and the numerous striking circumstances of his life, are in no

instance in the slightest degree alluded to, though one would think that they must naturally have occurred to the mind of his friend and admirer, when collecting topics of sympathy or eulogium. It is to be observed also, that between the ages of Shakespeare and Southampton there was only a difference of about nine years, and yet the poet alludes to the *autumn* of his own life and the *spring* of the object of the sonnets. The last sonnet in the number of those supposed to be addressed to a male speaks of him as a "lovely boy."

I find myself in two or three particulars forestalled in these objections to Dr. Drake's hypothesis by a writer under the signature of J. B. in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for September and October, 1832. My notes on this subject, however, though not published, were printed as memoranda for my own use at the *Bengal Hurkari* Office, in Calcutta, at least four years ago, and I have still some of the printed copies of these in my possession.* I do not wish to deduct from the merit of the writer alluded to, but to protect myself from the charge of plagiarism on account of a mere coincidence of opinion. The contributor to the *Gentleman's Magazine* has endeavoured to prove, in a very shrewd and able paper, that Lord Southampton is *not* the person addressed in the first 126 sonnets, and that the real object of them is Mr. William Herbert, subsequently third Earl of Pembroke.

I will not encroach on the reader's patience with a regular analysis of the writer's arguments. I admire his sagacity and acuteness, and I admit that many of his illustrations tell with great effect; but yet I am by no means satisfied that he has solved the riddle, which has perplexed and wearied so many learned heads. I must just briefly state that he places considerable stress on the following facts. The initials in the dedication may apply to the name of W. Herbert, while they cannot be applied to H. Wriothesley (Earl of Southampton), except by an unjustifiable transposition. The first also was eminently handsome, and therefore worthy of the praises lavished on the beauty of the object of the sonnets. Lord Southampton was in this respect not remarkable. The difference between the ages of Herbert and Shakespeare agrees better with certain passages in the sonnets, than that between Lord Southampton and the poet. The notice of "a better spirit," who interfered with our great poet's influence with his patron, alludes to Daniel

* The present article originally appeared in the *Calcutta Literary Gazette*, April 5, 1834. The memoranda alluded to must have been printed in 1829.

(a highly celebrated and popular poet at that time), who it is known had *dedicated* to William Herbert, whereas Spenser, erroneously supposed to be alluded to did *not* dedicate to Herbert. From these and other "united proofs," as he calls them, the writer conceives that "the question to whom Shakespeare's sonnets are addressed is now decided."*

I shall state some of my reasons for still remaining sceptical on this intricate question. The Earl of Pembroke, though certainly a patron of Shakespeare, was not so generally known as such, as Lord Southampton was, and the sonnets frequently allude to the "*public kindness* shown to the poet." Lord Southampton is *said* to have presented him with the munificent gift of a thousand pounds, a sum at that period equal to five thousand pounds in the present day. This large donation is supposed to have been bestowed on Shakespeare in the decline of his life, to enable him to purchase "New Place" at Stratford, when he was about to retire from public life. So early as 1594, in the dedication of *The Rape of Lucrece*, the poet not merely *dedicates* his book, but observes, "*the LOVE I dedicate to your Lordship, is without end.*" He also adds, "WHAT I HAVE DONE IS YOURS, WHAT I HAVE TO DO IS YOURS; BEING PART IN ALL I HAVE DEVOTED YOURS."† Is it likely that his noble patron, who appears to have favoured him with such warm friendship and generous assistance from the commencement of the poet's career to its close, was thus indirectly slighted or insulted, as he must have been if the sonnets, which are often expressive of such *exclusive* friendship, gratitude, and duty, were addressed to Herbert?

In the account by the Oxford historian, A. à Wood, of the life and character of the Earl of Pembroke, he is described as "learned, and endowed to admiration with a *poetical genie*,

* Mr. B. Heywood Bright, in the number of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, in which the second part of J. B.'s article appears, put forth a claim to the merit of the same supposed discovery. He says that in 1819, he had convinced himself by laborious researches, that W. Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, was the person to whom Shakespeare addressed 126 of the sonnets. A friend, whom he refers to (Mr. Joseph Hunter), acknowledges that this hypothesis was communicated to him "many years ago." He (Mr. Bright) was warned, he says, that by delaying the publication he was putting to hazard an honourable opportunity of securing to himself some literary reputation, but was prevented by more pressing pursuits, from preparing his notes for publication.

Mr. C. A. Brown, in his *Shakespeare's Auto-Biographical Poems*, published in 1838, also expresses an opinion that Mr. W. H. may with every probability short of certainty have been William Herbert, afterwards Earl of Pembroke.

† Dr. Drake has inadvertently omitted to notice these expressions, which might have seemed to tell strongly in support of his own speculation. I am surprised that D'Israeli, with his passion for literary research, has not paid attention to this subject.

as by those amorous and not inelegant aires and poems of his composition doth evidently appear ; some of which had musical notes set to them by Henry Laws." And Lord Clarendon speaks of him as a man " of excellent parts and a graceful speaker upon any subject, having a good proportion of learning and a ready wit to apply it and enlarge upon it." Can it be supposed that Shakespeare would have dedicated 126 sonnets to the praise of a poet without a single allusion to his genius or its productions ? Shakespeare knew too well the nature of the commendation which a poet most dearly covets, to have been guilty of so offensive an omission. When Meres alluded to the " sugred sonnets," William Herbert was a boy of about 15 years of age, and it is difficult indeed to suppose that Shakespeare should have addressed a series of sonnets to such a youngster, calling upon him most earnestly to marry and leave behind him an image of his beauty. The person addressed is even somewhat severely remonstrated with for remaining in a state of " single blessedness."

" *Be not self-willed, for thou art much too fair
To be death's conquest and make worms thine heir.*" Son. 9.

" *For shame ! deny that thou bearest love to any
Who for thyself art so improvident.*" Son. 10.

I would draw another argument against both Dr. Drake and the Magazine writer (who signs himself J. B.) from the inconsistent and contradictory character of the dedication. The more I think of it, the more I am convinced that Shakespeare had nothing to do with the publication of the sonnets. It is as clear as the sun at noon-day, that some of the sonnets are addressed to a male object, and others to a female. But the dedication is addressed to a single individual, who is described as the " only begetter" of them. There has been a great deal of quibbling upon the word "*begetter*," some critics insisting that it means the *obtainer*, and others the *object* or *inspirer*. For my own part, I think it means the *obtainer*, for this seems the most easy and natural interpretation, and is attended with the fewest difficulties, though it partly nullifies much of the ingenious conjectural criticism of both Dr. Drake and J. B. The sonnets having been some years in circulation amongst the author's friends, we ought not to be surprised that they should at last have found their way into print without his sanction. The assertion that the person who gave or sold them to the bookseller is the *only* obtainer of them is a bookseller's boast, precisely in the style of many of our book-advertisements in the present day.

If Shakespeare had had any thing to do with the superintendence of the publication, he would hardly have allowed

himself to be styled "*our ever-living poet*;" or supposing that the practice of the age might have carried off the appearance of any peculiar impropriety in such a puff direct from his own bookseller, it is not to be credited for a moment that he would have left it to a mere trader to dedicate his work to either of his high and noble patrons. Shakespeare did not bring out his first two poems in this way. They were openly inscribed to his great patron, not giving him the sneaking and disrespectful address of *Mr. W. H.*, but his full rank, *The Right Honourable Henry Wriothesly, Earl of Southampton and Baron of Titchfield*. That the whole of the 154 sonnets cannot have been exclusively addressed to one individual will admit of no reasonable doubt; and yet if we are to believe that the dedication was addressed to *Mr. W. H.* as the sole *object* of the sonnets, the dedicator committed an egregious blunder. Is it likely that such a blunder would have been passed over by the eye of Shakespeare? The bookseller's application of the term *adventurer* to himself seems an additional indication that the risk and responsibility of the speculation were exclusively his own.

It is impossible in Calcutta to obtain every work that would be useful in literary inquiries of this nature, but I have had the good fortune to fall in with several books and separate essays in Magazines bearing reference to the present subject, and have been surprised that the dedication of the sonnets should have been (as it appears to me) invariably misunderstood, and that no doubts should ever have been expressed as to the authenticity of the first edition of these poems. Every one knows that Shakespeare was careless to a fault in these matters, and though he once expressed to a friend his anger at the insolence of a bookseller who published his *Passionate Pilgrim* without giving any notice to the author, the latter seems to have been more annoyed at the introduction into the volume of certain poems of his contemporaries under his name, than at the liberty taken with his own productions. His plays were repeatedly published in a surreptitious and most inaccurate and disgraceful manner, but it does not appear that he ever took any steps to check a system of piracy so much calculated to injure his reputation. Any other author would have sunk under the accumulated blunders and nonsense of his editors. But though it appears pretty clear to my apprehension that *W. H.* in the dedication cannot be the *only* subject of the sonnets, I am not sure that *some* of them may not have been addressed to him; and as he was probably one of the private friends amongst whom the *whole* of the sonnets circulated, his vanity might have prompted him to give copies of them to the bookseller, that

he might see the ones addressed to himself in a printed collection.

The bookseller, in his eagerness and ignorance, perhaps misunderstood the "*begetter*" or obtainer, and supposed the whole series to be attributed to him (the begetter,) instead perhaps of some half a dozen only. He accordingly lumped them altogether under one head, and occasioned that inextricable confusion which has since been the cause of so much perplexing and despairing research. If Shakespeare had had any thing to do with the edition, I think he would have dedicated the work in an open manner to his faithful friend and munificent patron (his earliest and his latest), Lord Southampton, and that he would have taken care so to divide and arrange the sonnets, and to indicate the subjects, as to render them intelligible to the reader. As they now stand, abstracting their poetical merit, they are nothing but a painful puzzle. It is perhaps worth while observing, that the evidently authentic editions of the *Venus and Adonis* and the *Rape of Lucrece* were both dedicated to the same patron, Lord Southampton, and both published by the same bookseller, Richard Field; but the spurious edition of the *Passionate Pilgrim* was dedicated to no one, and published by Jaggard, and the (as I suppose) spurious edition of the sonnets was dedicated to two initials, W. H. preceded by a *Mr.* and published by T. T. (Thomas Thorpe), who I suspect was a bookseller of "no very good repute."

It may be thought by some readers that I have entered into this discussion rather too minutely, but I confess that I have reluctantly checked myself from entering into a still more elaborate consideration of what I esteem a highly interesting literary question.

It is, I think, pretty evident, notwithstanding the extreme neglect which has hitherto attended these sonnets, that they are now gradually emerging from their long obscurity. Within these last eight years, several new editions have been published. In 1825, Mr. Pickering published an edition of Shakespeare's poems and sonnets but without a single note or comment or a single line of preface, and the typography is not particularly correct. In 1831, Mr. Moxon (a young and enterprising publisher of great taste, and himself a writer of sonnets), published an edition of Shakespeare's and Milton's sonnets together in one volume. This is said to be a beautiful edition, very handsomely printed (one sonnet on each page,) but I have not seen a copy. I believe it is without notes. Mr. Pickering, besides his edition of 1825, published in 1832 an edition which is included in the Aldine edition of the British Poets, a very tasteful collection. This last edition

of Shakespeare's poems is finely printed on good paper, but the sonnets are a little too crowded, and in consequence of the glossarial foot-notes of various length, are very unequally divided, which is particularly objectionable in the appearance of so short and compact a form of verse. This defect is not in keeping with the general elegance of the Aldine editions.

Shakespeare himself had a high opinion of his own sonnets, which he thought would secure to himself and the several objects of them an immortal fame. And this is another reason why it is improbable that he had any concern in their publication, for as it is clear that he intended to immortalize his friends, he would never have arranged the sonnets in so confused a manner as to leave the objects of them to be guessed at.

Shakespeare somewhere styles the sonnet the "*deep-brained sonnet*." Wordsworth says,

" Scorn not the sonnet, Critic ; you have frowned
Mindless of its just honours ; *with this key*
Shakespeare unlocked his heart !"

Throughout the whole series of sonnets our great poet makes not a single allusion to his dramas though frequently the same lines and images appear in both. He edited two separate volumes of his poems, but not one edition of his plays. In fact he was best known by his minor poems, which were very popular. His first two poems went through six editions in thirteen years, while during the same period, *Romeo and Juliet* (his most popular play) passed through the press but twice.

The following are the conclusions I have arrived at. The sonnets were incorrectly arranged by an ignorant bookseller—they were addressed to several individuals, male and female, in some cases real and in others imaginary—some of them were possibly written in the character of Lord Southampton to the "*faire Mrs. Vernon*," (afterwards his Lordship's wife,) and some in the character of that lady to Lord Southampton—some were written in the poet's own character,* and perhaps the two or three of them which, it must be admitted, are in many respects objectionable, were not the production of Shakespeare, but of some unknown and inferior author.

NOTE.

Since the publication of the foregoing essay in the first edition of the *Literary Leaves* (in 1836), and the appearance of

* The passages that I have quoted as illustrative of the poet's circumstances and feelings, are, I think, amongst those that are written in his own character.

the article by J. B. in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Mr. Charles Armitage Brown has published a work on Shakespeare's sonnets.* He has divided the whole series, which he looks upon rather as connected stanzas than as separate sonnets, into six different poems; and as they contain incidental revelations of the poet's own condition, he has called them *Shakespeare's Auto-Biographical Poems*, which forms the leading title of his book. This original fancy at first surprised and interested me exceedingly, but on turning again to the sonnets to see how far the matter and manner corresponded with Mr. Brown's divisions, I confess that I could discover more boldness and ingenuity in his arrangement than accuracy or truth. The following is the order of the sonnet-poems according to Mr. Brown's scheme:—

First Poem.—Stanzas 1 to 26.—*To his friend, persuading him to marry.*

Second Poem.—Stanzas 27 to 55.—*To his friend who had robbed the poet of his mistress, forgiving him.*

Third Poem.—Stanzas 56 to 77.—*To his friend, complaining of his coldness, and warning him of life's decay.*

Fourth Poem.—Stanzas 78 to 101.—*To his friend, complaining that he prefers another poet's praises, and reproving him for faults that may injure his character.*

Fifth Poem.—Stanzas 102 to 126.—*To his friend, excusing himself for having been sometimes silent and disclaiming the charge of inconstancy.*

Sixth Poem.—Stanzas 127 to 152.—*To his mistress, on her infidelity.*

Now only the first seventeen sonnets of the first division have any allusion whatever to the subject of marriage. The remaining nine are merely general expressions of admiration and regard. The 20th sonnet is one of the most painful and perplexing I ever read. It is a truly disagreeable enigma. If I have caught any glimpse of the real meaning, I could heartily wish that Shakespeare had never written it; but the sonnets are so involved in mystery with respect to the object of them, that it would be presumptuous and unreasonable to speak disrespectfully of such a man as Shakespeare, on account of any thing that may wear an objectionable aspect in such very uncertain indications of his moral character.

I can discover no greater break or suspension between the 26th and 27th sonnet than there is between any two of the last nine of the first division. Certainly the 27th does not

* My essay on the sonnets also appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, soon after the 1st or 2nd edition (I quite forget which) of the *Literary Leaves*.

look like the commencement of a fresh series, nor does it include any allusion whatever to the poet's having been "*robbed of his mistress*." It is of the same general tenor as the nine immediately preceding sonnets. In the sixth division Mr. Brown acknowledges, that there are two sonnets that are not in keeping with the rest, and very coolly tells us that "*these two stanzas should be expunged from the poem*."

But though Mr. Brown has not, I think, succeeded in proving that all the sonnets should be divided as he proposes, his book is altogether an interesting one and well deserves the attention of all admirers of Shakespeare. I should not omit to mention that Mr. Brown is of the same opinion as Mr. Heywood Bright and J. B. in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, to neither of whom, however, he makes any allusion, and it is therefore to be presumed that he had not heard of their labours in the same field. Perhaps the most striking part of his publication is the attempt to show from the internal evidence of his plays, that the great poet must have visited Italy. Nothing, however, is absolutely proved, though much pleasing speculation is very ingeniously and plausibly supported. It is perhaps too late now to look for the discovery of any new facts of much importance in the personal history of Shakespeare beyond those indicated in the sonnets.

SONNET—TO A CHILD.

THOU lovely child ! When I behold the smile
 Over thy rosy features brightly play,
 As darts on rippling waves the morning ray,
 Thy fair and open brow up-raised the while,
 Untouched by withering fears of worldly guile.
 Nor taught the trusting bosom to betray,—
 Thy sinless graces win my soul away
 From dreams and thoughts that darken and defile !
 Scion of Beauty ! If a stranger's eye
 Thus linger on thee—if his bosom's pain
 Charmed by thy cherub looks forget to smart—
 Oh ! how unutterably sweet *her* joy !
 Oh ! how indissolubly firm the chain,
 That binds, with links of love, thy *mother's* heart !

NATURE.

I.

THE fair smile of morning,
 The glory of noon,
 The bright stars adorning
 The path of the moon ;
 The sky-mingled mountain,
 The valley and plain,
 The lake and the fountain,
 The river and main ;
 Their magic refining,
 And raising the soul,
 Its care and repining,
 Illume and controul.

II.

The timid Spring stealing
 Through light and perfume,
 The Summer revealing
 His beauty and bloom ;
 The rich Autumn glowing
 With fruit-treasures crowned,
 The pale Winter throwing
 His snow-wreaths around ;
 All widely diffusing
 A charm on the earth,
 Wake loftiest musing,
 And holiest mirth.

III.

There is not a sorrow
 That hath not a balm,
 From nature to borrow,
 In tempest or calm ;
 There is not a season,
 There is not a scene,
 But Fancy and Reason
 May hail it serene,
 And own its possessing
 A zest for the glad,
 A beauty or blessing
 To solace the sad !

MORNING LANDSCAPE IN PENANG.

A VIEW FROM "THE GREAT HILL."

DAY dimly breaks. From this aerial height
 I downward gaze in wonder ; for the scene
 Hath wildly changed ! The sylvan villas white,
 Small winding paths, and shadowy groves serene,
 The miniature town, the sea so blue and bright,
 The speck-like ships, the little islets green
 That yester-eve in smiling beauty lay,
 Silently basking in the sun's last ray,
 Have vanished all—as if they ne'er had been,
 Save in the dreams that beautify the night
 But melt away beneath the morning light ;
 Or as some lovely vision made to pass
 In shifting hues across the Wizard's glass.

From the broad base of this calm mountain high,
 O'er grove, o'er town, o'er ocean's severing stream,
 And o'er wide plains beyond, to where the sky
 Is pierced by hoary Kedah, (lord supreme
 Of all Malayan hills,) the white clouds lie,
 Layer on layer, like leagues of stainless snow,
 Opaque and fixed, as if in vain would blow
 The summer winds, in vain the solar ray
 Shine on their frozen forms.

While thus the scene,
 Like Eastern bride beneath a jealous screen,
 Curtaineth its varied charms, a stranger's eye
 Might pass the desolate blank regardless by,
 Or trace, from this hill's foot to far Malay
 A desert lone 'neath winter's dreariest day,
 And make the two lands one. 'Twere hard to deem
 The blue sea lies between—that this fair Isle,
 Though now so like a Lapland wild she seem,
 Bears on her plain and valley fruits and flowers
 Of taste and color matchless, secret bowers
 Where blissful lovers meet, bright odorous trees,
 (By careful art disposed in regular file.)
 That feast to faintness the enamoured breeze,
 And sunny road, and cool umbrageous nook,
 White cot, green hedge-row trim, and garden gay,
 Oft taught by fairest hands its best array,
 And feathery fern, tall palm, and silver brook,
 And deathless summer hues !

Wait, Stranger, still,
 And watch the gradual light on yonder hill ;
 For there the God of day with golden wand
 Shall rise and touch the enchanted sea and land !
 The snow-like shroud shall melt ; the living scene
 Out-burst in beauty ; as when Night's fair queen,
 A fond up-gazing votary to beguile,
 Unfolds her cloud-pavilion with a smile ;
 Or as when some coy maiden lifts her veil
 From love's own heaven, and lets her features bright,
 That make the wondering stars above grow pale,
 Beam on the soul in all their blushing light !

'Tis thus with human life ! Its prospects fair
 Oft, mantled in the dull mist of despair,
 Seem lost eternally. But brighter hours
 Return, like blue skies after summer showers,
 When green leaves shine and fragrance fills the air.
 Life sparkles, and its vapours far off roll
 Beneath the sudden sunshine of the soul !
 And then we blush to think how coward fright
 Sees in a passing cloud the ghost of night,
 Or deems when light and life a moment sever
 The sun of hope hath left this world for ever.

There is no scene in nature, if we scan
 It rightly, that may seem unmeant for man.
 Profuse and fair, to charm the thoughtful eye,
 Her living truths, her pictured precepts lie
 On earth and ocean and the starry sky.

SONNET.

THERE are no mortal limits to the sway
 That God hath given the spirit, of this frame
 The tenant, not the prisoner. Nought can tame
 Her sovereign will. She mocks at human clay,
 The dim weak wall that seemeth like a stay ;—
 So the fair moon that envious night would shame,
 And shroud her form divine, out-bursts like flame
 From smouldering fires, and brightens on her way !
 The forehead pale, despite its ivory bound,
 As glass is fragile, and the eye as clear,
 When the roused soul awakes. The scenes around
 Her worldly path—hills, vales, and woods,—appear
 Her realm no more. She soars from earth's low ground
 And seeks, on viewless wings, a holier sphere.

THE PARTED LOVER TO HIS MISTRESS.

I.

Not without cause those bitter tears,
 Dear lady, at our parting fell :
 When boding thoughts, like solemn seers,
 Low-whispered 'twas *our last farewell* ;—
 How sadly since that fatal day
 A hundred moons have passed away !

II.

We feel life's sweetest dreams are o'er,
 We see the Atlantic waters vast
 Between us roll, and ah ! no more
 May hope, that billowy barrier past
 To meet again on English land
 With lip to lip, and hand to hand !

III.

Within the same wide world we stray,
 The same bright planets still behold,
 We see the same blue ocean play
 And hear its mystic music old ;
 But oh, the mutual smile and word,
 No more is seen, no more is heard !

IV.

And yet we love ! Still lives the flame
 That made our mental sky so bright.
 But, though its vital warmth's the same,
 We mourn, alas ! its lessened light ;
 As when the sweet moon drops her veil,
 And cloud-divided stars grow pale.

V.

Undying wishes, weak and vain,
 And passion's thorns without its flowers,
 Deep yearnings, fraught with speechless pain,
 And mournful memories, are ours ;
 Without the wild hopes love imparts,
 Without the calm of vacant hearts

VI.

Oh, that my Muse could breathe a strain
 Of truthful power, and o'er the sea
 Send all that stirs my heart and brain,
 A living, speaking throng, to thee—
 The dreams in mind's lone twilight lost,
 The thoughts in troubled silence tost.

VII.

But there are thoughts no bard may tell,
 Dreams that like doubtful shadows come,
 And none e'er broke the mystic spell
 That makes our deepest feelings dumb ;
 And written words are weak as air,
 And ne'er laid human bosom bare.

VIII.

And thus is loneliness more lone—
 A double solitude ! The look—
 The pressure of the hand—the tone
 That love's soft tremor sweetly shook—
 Fate now denies,—and what are spared
 But thoughts untold and dreams unshared ?

IX.

Alas ! we live and love in vain !
 For what for us hath life or love ?
 The solid earth, the moving main
 Divide us, and the stars above
 Mock pleasures past—hope's vanished store—
 With which we watched their lights of yore !

SONNET,

ON RETURNING TO CALCUTTA AFTER A VOYAGE TO THE
 STRAITS OF MALACCA.

UMBRAGEOUS woods, green dells, and mountains high,
 And bright cascades, and wide cerulean seas,
 Slumbering, or snow-wreathed by the freshening breeze,
 And isles like motionless clouds upon the sky
 In silent summer noons, late charmed mine eye,
 Until my soul was stirred like wind-touched trees,
 And passionate love and speechless ecstasies
 Up-raised the thoughts in spiritual depths that lie.
 Dear scenes, ye haunt me still ! Yet I behold
 This sultry city on the level shore
 Not all unmoved ; for here our fathers bold
 Won proud historic names in days of yore,
 And here are living hearts that ne'er grow cold,
 And many a friendly hand, and open door.

Calcutta, January, 1843.

DICKENS'S DAVID COPPERFIELD AND THACKERAY'S PENDENNIS.

THE serial plan of publication is very tantalizing and unsatisfactory. We so much dislike this periodical or bit-by-bit system of story-telling, that we rarely venture to taste a single page of a serial novel until we can obtain the possession of the completed work ; so that we are unable to share in the tea-table gossip about the new publication until it is an old one to most other readers, and has in some cases even ceased to be the author's last claim upon our grateful admiration ; for in these days of rapid and voluminous literature, a writer of fiction has no sooner arrived at the termination of one work than he announces the commencement of another. But observing the intense enjoyment of other readers, in the perusal of the small instalments of the *Personal History and Experience of David Copperfield*, we grew too impatient to wait for its completion. Nor do we regret that in this instance we broke through our general rule, and discussed the work at the rate of a single slice per mensem. If Dickens were a more skilful weaver of long stories—if his plots were more artistically constructed—these periodical little bits, these “solutions of continuity,” would be less acceptable. But his literary structures, though presenting innumerable points for the eye to dwell upon with delight and admiration, are very far from being remarkable for breadth and unity of design. We cannot say of any work from the hand of this author, what Pope says of St. Peter's at Rome.

“No single parts unequally surprise,
All comes united to the admiring eyes.”

It is not “the joint force and full result of all” by which we estimate the value of the labours of a Dickens, or by which we recognize his claims to applause as a literary artist. There is little probability that he will ever produce a perfect prose epic, like that of *Tom Jones*, in which all the parts are so dependent on each other, that it would be a mortal mutilation to separate them. A work, which when completed forms one harmonious whole, cannot, without great injury to the effect of it, be served up piece-meal to the reader at intervals of thirty days. Dickens's strength lies not in the plot, but in the scenes, incidents and portraits. Nor does he generally concentrate the main interest in a hero or a heroine, whose absence for any considerable period would make the reader fancy that he was reading something like the play of *Hamlet* with the part of the philosophical Prince omitted.

He gives us no prose-dramas of highly finished construction ; no Hamlets, Macbeths, Lears, and Othellos. Few story-tellers of equal ability could so well afford to be frequently interrupted. The serial system, therefore, is not quite so objectionable in the works of Dickens as it is in the works of most other writers. There are some artists whose separate *studies* are more admirable than their complete productions, because they have not the modifying faculty which compresses several units into one whole. This is the case with Dickens. But *his* "units" are often better than other men's "wholes." There is a roundness and integrity in separate portions of the book which we miss when we regard it as one complete work of art. He has "bits" of word-painting, and passages of profound pathos and genial humour, that are perhaps unrivalled by any other specimens of poetry in prose, with which English literature has yet been enriched. Every reader of Dickens has been especially delighted with the marvellous felicity of his descriptions of inanimate objects. He gives life and sentiment to them in a manner which has never before been attempted with any approach to the same success. Leigh Hunt indeed, of whose prose essays Dickens is a great admirer, and whose turn of expression he occasionally echoes, has exhibited something of the same dexterity and happiness in painting external objects with epithets alive with colour ; but Dickens surpasses him not merely in catching the literal physiognomy of dead matter, but in the power of giving it a moral tone and sentiment in perfect keeping with the hour and the mind with which it is associated. In this respect there is no deficiency in the power to combine many units into one whole. Quite the contrary. He here exhibits that true art which is above all rule, and which is the result of an inspired instinct. He is by far the finest prose painter of the externals of actual life and natural objects that this age has produced ; and in this line the versatility of his genius is not less wonderful than its strength. He is equally successful, in the delineation of the most sublime and mighty objects and the most minute and ludicrous.

We had not a very high opinion of Dickens as a writer of fiction on his first appearance. His *Pickwick*, especially, we thought an unexceedingly unequal and imperfect work : and we think so still. But when he once began to put forth his full strength, and he was not very long in doing so, we agreed with all the rest of the world, that he was capable of taking a high station amongst that illustrious band whose names are a nation's glory, and will be as familiar as household words to our children's children.

The knowledge of human nature which his works exhibit, would be amazing in so young a man, if we did not remember that genius sees and reflects and feels more in one year than ordinary men do in twenty. It is a foolish mistake to suppose that a writer cannot thoroughly understand human nature until he has enjoyed many years of experience and visited many countries and seen men of every trade and creed and in all varieties of condition. A man must be young indeed, and his sphere miserably limited, if he has not seen enough of humanity to trace most of its leading traits and universal characteristics; that is, if he have an eye to see with and a mind that can digest the materials which observation supplies. A gifted observer of human nature is not long in discovering that the majority of men are but different editions of the same work. It has been made a matter of ignorant wonder that Shakespeare, who had no personal experience of courts, should have painted kings and courtiers with such unrivalled truth. It was not that he knew more of men's external and accidental circumstances than other dramatists, but that he knew more of that inner human nature, which is the same in all countries and under all conditions.

It is delightful to find that, however capable of depicting the fiercer and baser passions of the heart, Dickens exhibits the strongest inclination to dwell upon the brightest side of the picture of human life. He "humanizes" with a heart as full to the brim with the milk of human kindness as that of his benevolent and gifted friend Leigh Hunt, and with a wider range of observation. We can hardly read a page of his writings without discovering that he is no aristocrat. He makes the humblest life lovely. He does not usher the poor man into our drawing-rooms with an air of patronage and condescension. He is his hearty friend and feels but on equal terms with him. His unaffected love and admiration and reverence for true virtue in the lowliest condition is charmingly exhibited in his portraits of some poor fishermen, and an old maid servant or nurse in the novel before us. How much nobler is this genial and generous appreciation of mankind than the cold arrogant scorn of his fellow-men, and that unbelief in all things good which Childe Harold once rendered fashionable even amongst many whose inward nature might have been touched by a generous teacher into finer music, and instructed in a philosophy at once more benevolent and more true.

We hope Dickens's most accurate and beautiful portrayures of middle and lower life will drive the novels of fashionable society and the silver-fork school completely out of the field. In fact, we believe that they have already effected a

consummation so devoutly to be wished. We rarely meet with an imitator of Theodore Hook, and the pretended revelations of high life by booksellers' hacks, have now but a very limited popularity. Works of fiction, like those of Dickens, that without perking the moral in our faces, awaken our noblest sympathies, and teach us to respect our nature, are a truly wholesome diet for the mind, and no books of amusement can more profitably occupy the leisure of youthful readers.

David Copperfield is decidedly one of the most successful and valuable of this author's productions. It teems with exquisite portraits. The character of Agnes especially is inexpressibly delightful. What a combination of noble and gentle qualities in one person! What a fine and just compliment to the fair sex! We only wonder how the author had the heart to let his hero be so long in contact with so sweet and elevated a nature, and yet elect a silly little beauty, the acquaintance of a day, and whom Dr. Johnson would have called an "*unlucky girl*," for the companion of his life. It is not till the death of his first chosen leaves him free again that he discovers the error of which he had been guilty and yearns to secure to himself so priceless a treasure. Better late than never. But even to the last he hesitates from such idle scruples that the impatient reader is put into a state of the most painful anxiety lest the man in whose fortunes he has been made to take an interest, should miss his true happiness a second time and for ever.

We have rarely laid down a work of fiction with so much regret that we had come to the end of it as we have laid down this. In the elaborate novels of Richardson and similar writers, though the interest is so great that we cannot put the volume aside until we have completed it, we are often angry with the author for keeping us so long under a spell which we cannot break. We are impatient to see the end, but we cannot bring ourselves to overleap the intermediate incidents. The author drags us on from page to page, from volume to volume, by a strange power that at once charms and irritates and wearies us. This is not the case with Dickens. The reader is delighted with his company, and is sorry to arrive at the end of his journey, which, however long it may be in reality, always seems too short. If the novel of David Copperfield had been five times as voluminous as it is, we should not have been impatient for the end, and we are by no means surprized that the author himself should express his regret at taking leave of his own exquisite creations in whose actual existence as beings of flesh and blood he was as much a believer as the most enchanted of his readers.

We shall close this brief and imperfect notice of the His-

tory of David Copperfield with the interesting little preface to the completed work :—

“ I do not find it easy to get sufficiently far away from this Book, in the first sensations of having finished it, to refer to it with the composure which this formal heading would seem to require. My interest in it, is so recent and strong ; and my mind is so divided between pleasure and regret—pleasure in the achievement of a long design, regret in the separation from many companions—that I am in danger of wearying the reader whom I love, with personal confidences, and private emotions.

Besides which, all that I could say of the Story to any purpose, I have endeavoured to say in it.

It would concern the reader little, perhaps to know, how sorrowfully the pen is laid down at the close of a two-years' imaginative task ; or how an author feels as if he were dismissing some portion of himself into the shadowy world when a crowd of the creatures of his brain are going from him for ever. Yet, I have nothing else to tell ; unless, indeed, I were to confess (which might be of less moment still) that no one can ever believe this Narrative, in the reading, more than I have believed it in the writing.

Instead of looking back, therefore, I will look forward. I cannot close this Volume more agreeably to myself, than with a hopeful glance towards the time when I shall again put forth my two green leaves once a month, and with a faithful remembrance of the genial sun and showers that have fallen on these leaves of David Copperfield, and made me happy.”

Thackeray's *Pendennis* has been brought to a close about the same time as Dickens's David Copperfield, and this coincidence, in point of time, in the two stories, will, perhaps, suggest to many critics a comparison between the authors. Not that a comparison can be carried out on equal terms, for Thackeray is, in all essential points, so manifestly inferior to Dickens, that it is impossible to bring them together without making the one writer a foil to the other. Dickens is unquestionably a writer of a very high order of genius, and has creative and poetical faculties that place him far above the author of *Pendennis* in the scale of intellect. There is, however, a greater equality in the writings of Thackeray than in those of Dickens. There are frequently whole pages, indeed chapters, in the works of the latter that in our opinion too much resemble some of the objectionable materials that make up the novel of *Pickwick*, which, in spite of a few occasional excellencies, has more sins against truth, nature, and good taste, than any novel that we ever met with from the pen of a man of genuine talent. Thackeray rarely falls so low—but then he never ascends so high as Dickens, and we suppose no one would hesitate to give the preference upon the whole to the most unequal writer of the two. And yet Thackeray's quality is not by any means a tame and dull uniformity ; nor is it a uniformity of mere wit, smartness and vivacity. He has sometimes scenes of gentle pathos, though they do not stir the innermost depths of our nature like those of Dickens. It has

been said that the author of *Pendennis* is a man of talent merely, and that the author of *David Copperfield* is a man of genius. This is not, we think, a just criticism. Thackeray has written hundreds of pages that none but a man of genius could write. If there were but one order of genius and no degrees of it, we should be obliged to admit that Thackeray is a man of talent only ; but there are many kinds and innumerable gradations of genius ; and though Thackeray is not like Dickens, a poet in prose, he exhibits a subtlety of observation, and a power of moving the feelings, of which talent alone is utterly incapable.

But Dickens' poetical nature takes him into regions of universality. He describes human nature. Thackeray is more at home in describing particular classes. No one since Theodore Hook has given us better pictures of ordinary London life in the upper ranks. He apprehends thoroughly what he actually sees before him, and copies it in colours of reality. He is at home in the accidental or conventional. But Dickens *creates* characters, and some of them will live for ever. They have the elements of general nature in them. They are not mere transcripts of the life of a particular class, or period, or country. Thackeray deals chiefly in light satire,—Dickens in humour. They have both a tendency to caricature, but Dickens' rarely offends, whereas Thackeray's has brought a hornet's nest about his ears. His caricatures of literary men, especially, have conjured up a host of rather troublesome enemies.

Thackeray's writings make us, upon the whole, dissatisfied with human life. We see too much frivolity and hollowness in *his* world to be in good humour with it. But after the perusal of Dickens,

A saddler and a wiser man,
We rise the morrow morn.

On the whole, we rather doubt whether Thackeray will be much read some fifty years hence, and we are sure that Dickens will.

DEATH.

"I leave you and all my other concerns, in the hands of that God who will certainly do that which is best for us both ; but I can assure you, that if my prayers, and the prayers of a great many excellent friends here about, can keep you a few years longer from heaven, you will not be there very soon."—*Correspondence and Diary of Philip Doddridge, D. D.*

I

WE weep and tremble at the doom—
 The dreadful doom of death :
 'Tis sad amidst the fair earth's bloom
 To yield this mortal breath !
 The brave may proudly bear the pain—
 That soon must pass away—
 But oh ! to think that ne'er again
 Dear friends with eager hands shall greet,
 Or fond hearts share Love's converse sweet,
 O'erwhelms us with dismay !

II.

'Tis true that trusting faith is told
 Of worlds beyond the sky,
 And few there are so blind and bold
 As dare such creed deny ;
 It is not that an after-state,
 Or dark or doubtful seems ;
 Alas ! we shrink from future fate
 Because we may not brook the thought
 That hours with Life's endearments fraught
 Are unreturning dreams !

III.

We find each earthly bliss alloyed,
 Each smile foretells a tear,
 But yet the breast would soon be cloyed
 That never felt a fear :—
 The beauty of the brightest beam
 Is deepened by the shade—
 Fairest the stars through darkness gleam—
 The broad red sun of even-tide
 Assumes a more imposing pride
 In floating clouds arrayed.

IV.

Perfection hath not reigned on earth,
 Nor ruled the human mind ;
 We pant not for diviner worth
 Nor raptures more refined ;
 A human weakness makes us cling
 To human forms alone ;
 We feel we cannot coldly fling
 On Lethe's dark insatiate stream
 The charms of Life's familiar dream,
 And turn to scenes unknown.

V.

'Tis this that fills the final hour
 With mournfulness and dread ;
 Love's tender ties and friendship's power
 Avail not with the dead !
 And though we meet to part no more
 We shall not be the same ;
 The things that linked our hearts of yore
 The damp cold hand of death divides,
 And nought in holier realms abides
 Of this terrestrial frame.

VI.

Thy radiant fields, Eternity !
 The dreamer's breast alarm,
 They echo not a human sigh
 Nor own a human charm !
 Thy skies tho' dazzled soul appal
 And too severely glow ;
 Their hues no mortal days recall ;—
 And in thy bright and boundless space
 Where only spirits dwell, we trace
 No features loved below !

VII.

Oh, visions weak and idle fears
 That fleshly hearts beguile,
 At which methinks through pitying tears
 Angelic faces smile !
 Were that dark curtain drawn aside
 This world and heaven between,
 How all the painted mists of pride,
 Delusive hopes, and fancies vain,
 Would fade like twilight's shadowy train,
 'Neath day's broad sky scene !

VIII.

For He who breathed us into birth,
 And placed us here below,
 Who made the dull mole under earth
 A sense of pleasure know,
 Who bade the bee suck luscious life
 From plants that poison bear,
 And gave to Man in fields of strife
 A taste of peace—in heavenly bowers
 Will surely grant diviner powers
 Diviner bliss to share.

IX.

With God shall God-like spirits dwell,
 With God-like rapture glow,
 Nor on their dim deserted cell
 One glance regretful throw ;
 And as the man out-grows the child
 Each earth-freed soul mature,
 With Life's mean gauds no more beguiled,
 Shall proudly rise o'er mortal dreams,
 And scatter, like a sun, the steams
 Of this low soil impure !

STANZAS.

TO A LADY, ON RECEIVING FROM HER A BEAUTIFUL FLOWER.

I.

A DEED of grace—a graceful gift—and graceful is the giver !
 Like ear-rings on thine own fair head, these long buds hang
 and quiver :
 Each tremulous taper branch is thrilled—flutter the wing-like
 leaves—
 For thus, to part from thee, sweet maid, the floral spirit grieves !

II

Rude gods in brass or gold enchant an untaught devotee—
 Fair marble shapes, rich paintings old, are Art's idolatry ;
 But nought e'er charmed a human breast like this small
 trembling flower,
 Minute and delicate work divine of world-creative power.

III

This flower's the Queen of all earth's flowers, and loveliest
 things appear,
 Linked by some secret sympathy, in this mysterious sphere ;
 The giver and the gift seem one, and thou thyself art nigh,
 When this glory of the garden greets thy lover's raptured eye.

STANZAS.

I.

FLING wide the casement, dearest—
 Oh, what a sight is here !
 This sky is far the clearest
 I've seen for many a year.
 It well might tempt the curious eye
 Its still cerulean depths to try,
 To pierce its glorious veil of light
 For dream-like hints of secrets bright ;
 But though it more transparent seem
 Than glassy lake or shallow stream,
 It mocks us like the purple sea
 That shrouds vast worlds of mystery.

II.

Yet why need mortal vision
 Thus strain its bounded powers ?
 'Tis no such hard transition
 To turn to Earth's green bowers ;
 To watch the white sheep on the hill,
 Or whiter swans on lakelets still—
 Or see the village boys at play
 With tireless limbs and spirits gay—
 While the swart labourer wipes his brow,
 And aged men, beneath the bough
 Of aged oak, the luxury share
 Of slumber in the noon-tide air.

III.

How sweet is his condition
 Whose calm heart knows content ;
 He findeth rich provision
 Of all for mortals meant.
 We need not seek forbidden lore
 'Mid scenes that own a sanctioned store
 Of pleasures pure and knowledge bright
 For minds that yearn for truth and right ;
 The bee that hums o'er Indian bowers
 Is not so blest with choice of flowers,
 With all the soul of sweetness rife
 As man with means of mental life.

IV.

Now shut the casement, dearest,
Methinks sweet sleep is nigh,
The hour that most thou fearest
Is passing gently by ;
Fair nature's smile hath done its part,
A summer feeling calms my heart.
E'en now, these heavy lids would close
And lock my soul in blest repose :
Then kiss me, sweet one,—shed no tears
For me, nor cherish fruitless fears ;
I know the strong life in me still
Can more than thwart this fever's will.

SONG.

A GLORIOUS fate is thine, fair Maid !
The green earth and the sky
Nor bear an ill, nor cast a shade
To dim thine azure eye.

Thy soul is flashing o'er thy face,
Where bright emotions play,
As waves o'er breazy rivers race
Beneath the morning ray.

My path was lone, and all around
The ruthless storm had been,
And life had not a sight or sound
To cheer the clouded scene.

But now my darker dreams depart,
Thy form and voice are near,
A light is on my raptured heart,
And music in my ear !

SUMMER AND WINTER.

[WRITTEN IN INDIA IN THE COLD SEASON.]

At this season of the year, in dear Old England, how exquisite is the enjoyment of a brisk morning walk and the social evening fire! Though a cold day in Calcutta is not exactly like a cold day in London, it often revives the remembrance of it. An Indian winter is indeed far less agreeable than a winter in England, but it is not without its pleasures. The mornings and evenings are often delightful.

Still, however, who would not prefer the more wholesome frigidity of England? There, the external gloom and bleakness enhance our in-door comforts, and we do not miss sunny skies when greeted with sunny looks. If we see no blooming gardens, we see blooming faces. But as we have few domestic enjoyments in this country, and as our houses are as open as bird-cages, we have little comfort when compelled to remain at home on a cold day, with a sharp easterly wind whistling through every room. In our dear native country each season has its peculiar moral or physical attractions. It is not easy to say which is the most agreeable—its summer or its winter. Perhaps I must decide in favour of the former. The memory of many a smiling summer day still flashes upon my soul. If the whole of human life were like a fine English day in June, we should cease to wish for "another and a better world." From dawn to sunset it is one revel of delight. How pleasantly, from the first break of day, have I lain wide awake, and traced the approach of the breakfast hour by the increasing notes of birds, and the advancing sun-light on my curtains! A summer feeling, at such a time, would steal upon my spirit, as I thought of the long, cheerful day before me, and planned some rural walk, or rustic entertainment. The ills that flesh is heir to, if they occurred for a moment to my mind, appeared like idle visions. They were inconceivable as real things. As I heard the lark singing in "a glorious privacy of light," and saw the boughs of the green and gold laburnum at my window, and had my fancy filled with images of natural beauty, I felt a glow of fresh life in my veins, and my heart was almost inebriated with pleasure. It is difficult, amidst such exhilarating influences, to entertain those melancholy ideas which sometimes crowd upon us, and appear so natural, at a less happy hour. Even actual misfortune comes in a questionable shape, when our physical constitution is in perfect health, and the flowers are in full bloom, and the streams are glitter-

ing in the sun. So powerfully does the light of external nature sometimes act upon the moral system, that a sweet sensation steals gradually over the heart, even when we think we have reason to be sorrowful, and while we almost accuse ourselves of a want of feeling. The fretful hypochondriac would do well to bear this in mind, and not take it for granted that all are cold and selfish who fail to sympathize with his fantastic cares. He should remember that men are sometimes so buoyed up by the sense of corporeal power, and a communion with nature in her cheerful moods, that things connected with their own personal interest, which at other times would irritate them to madness, pass by them like the wind. He himself must have had his intervals of comparative happiness, in which the causes of his present afflictions would have appeared trivial and absurd. He should not, then, expect persons whose blood is warm in their veins, and whose eyes are open to the blessed sun in heaven, to think more of his sorrows than he would himself, were his mind and body in a healthful state.

With what a light heart and eager appetite did I enter the little breakfast parlour, whose glass-doors opened upon a bed of flowers ! The table was spread with dewy and delicious fruits from our own garden, and gathered by fair and friendly hands. Beautiful and luscious as were these natural dainties, they were of small account in comparison with the fresh cheeks and cherry lips that so frankly accepted the wonted early greeting. Alas ! how that dear, domestic circle is now divided, and what a change has since come over the spirit of our dreams ! Yet still I cherish boyish feelings, and the past is sometimes present. As I give an imaginary kiss to an "old familiar face," and catch myself almost unconsciously, yet literally, returning imaginary smiles, my heart is as fresh and fervid as of yore. Fifteen years and fifteen thousand miles do not change or separate faithful spirits, nor annihilate early associations. Parted friends may still share the light of love, as severed clouds are equally kindled by the same sun.*

I must not be too egotistically garrulous in print, or I would now describe the various ways in which I have spent a summer's day in England. I would dilate upon my noon-day loiterings amidst wild ruins, and thick forests, and on the shaded banks of rivers—the pic-nic parties—the gipsy prophecies—the twilight homeward walk—the social tea drinking, and, the last scene of all, the "rosy dreams and slumbers

* I was so much flattered by Leigh Hunt's publicly expressed admiration of this image that I have since embodied it in verse : see page 171.

light," induced by wholesome exercise and placid thoughts. But perhaps these few simple allusions are sufficient to awaken a train of kindred associations in the reader's mind, and he will thank me for those words and images that are like the keys of memory, and "open all her cells with easy force."

If a summer's day be thus rife with pleasure, scarcely less so is a day in winter, though with some little drawbacks, that give, by contrast, a zest to its enjoyments. It is difficult to leave the warm morning bed and brave the external air. The fireless grate and frosted windows may well make the stoutest shudder. But when we have once screwed our courage to the sticking point, and with a single jerk of the clothes, and a brisk jump from the bed, have commenced the operations of the toilet, the battle is nearly over. The teeth chatter for a while, and the limbs shiver, and we do not feel particularly comfortable whilst breaking the ice in our jugs, and performing our cold ablutions amidst the sharp, glass-like fragments, and wiping our faces with a frozen towel. But these petty evils are quickly vanquished, and as we rush out of the house, and tread briskly and firmly on the hard ringing earth, and breathe our visible breath in the clear air, our strength and self-importance miraculously increase, and the whole frame begins to glow. The warmth and vigour thus acquired are inexpressibly delightful. As we re-enter the house, we are proud of our intrepidity and vigour, and pity the effeminacy of our less enterprising friends, who, though huddled together round the fire, like flies upon a sunny wall, still complain of cold, and instead of the bloom of health and animation, exhibit pale and pinched cheeks, blue noses, and hands cold, rigid, and of a deadly hue. Those who rise with spirit on a winter morning, and stir and thrill themselves with early exercise, are indifferent to the cold for the rest of the day, and feel a confidence in their corporeal energies, and a lightness of heart that are experienced at no other season. But even the timid and luxurious are not without their pleasures. As the shades of evening draw in, the parlour twilight—the closed curtains—and the cheerful fire, make home a little paradise to all!

The warm and cold seasons of India have no charms like these, but yet people who are guiltless of what Milton so finely calls "a sullenness against nature," and who are willing, in a spirit of true philosophy and piety, to extract good from every thing, may make themselves happy even in this land of exile. While I am writing this paragraph, a little bird in my room, who is as much a foreigner here as I am, is pouring out his soul in a flood of song. His notes breathe of joy. He pines not for an English meadow—he cares not for his

wiry bars—he envies not the little denizens of air that sometimes flutter pass my window, nor imagines, for a moment, that they come to mock him with their freedom. He is contented with his present enjoyments, because they are utterly undisturbed by idle comparisons with those experienced in the past or anticipated in the future. He has no thankless repinings, and no vain desires. Is superior intellect then so fatal, though sublime a gift, that we cannot possess it without the poisonous alloy of care? Must grief and ingratitude inevitably find entrance into the heart, in proportion to the loftiness and number of our mental endowments? Are we to seek for happiness in ignorance? To these questions the reply is obvious. Every good quality may be abused, and the greatest, most; and he who perversely employs his powers of thought and imagination to a wrong purpose, deserves the misery that he gains. Were we honestly to deduct from the ills of life all those of our own creation, how trifling the amount that would remain! We seem to invite and encourage sorrow, while happiness is, as it were, forced upon us against our will. It is wonderful how some men pertinaciously cling to care, and argue themselves into a dissatisfaction with their lot. Thus it is really a matter of little moment whether fortune smile or frown, for it is in vain to look for superior felicity amongst those who have more “appliances and means to boot,” than their fellow-men. Wealth, rank, and reputation, do not secure their possessors from the misery of discontent.

As happiness then depends upon the right direction and employment of our faculties, and not on worldly goods or mere localities, our countrymen might be cheerful enough, even in this foreign land, if they would only accustom themselves to a proper train of thinking, and be ready on every occasion to look on the brighter side of all things.* In reverting to home-scenes we should regard them for their intrinsic charms, and not turn them into a source of disquiet by mournfully comparing them with those around us. India, let Englishmen murmur as they will, has many attractions and enjoyments. The princely and generous style in which we live in this country, the frank and familiar tone of our little society, and the general mildness and equality of the climate, can hardly be denied by the most determined malcontent. It is true that the weather is often, in the summer months, a great deal warmer than we like it; but if “the

* “I was ever more disposed,” says Hume, “to see the favourable than the unfavourable side of things; a turn of mind which it is more happy to possess, than to be born to an estate of ten thousand a year.”

extreme heat" did not form a convenient subject for complaint and conversation, it is perhaps doubtful if it would so often be thought of or alluded to. And what climate is without its evils? The mornings and evenings of India are always cool enough for a drive, and the rest of the day is rarely so intolerable within doors as it is sometimes pathetically described. In the cold season a walk either in the morning or evening is delightful, and I am rejoiced to see many distinguished personages paying the climate the compliment of treating it like that of England. It is now fashionable to use our limbs in the ordinary way, and the "Garden of Eden"* has become a favourite promenade. It is not to be denied that besides the mere exercise, pedestrians at home have great advantages over those who are too aristocratic to leave their equipages, because they can cut across green and quiet fields, enter upon rural by-ways, and enjoy a thousand little patches of lovely scenery that are secrets to the high-road traveller. But still the Calcutta pedestrian has also his peculiar gratifications. It is true that he can enjoy no exclusive prospects, but he comes in immediate contact with the rank, beauty and fashion of the place, and if, like the writer of this article, he is fond of children, he will be delighted with the numberless pretty and happy little faces that crowd about him, and awaken a tone of tender sentiment in his mind, and re-kindle many sweet associations.

NOTE TO THE FOREGOING ESSAY.

I have touched upon the subject of the seasons in England and in India in a series of papers entitled *The Council of Three*. In the following passages, (extracted from those papers,) I have endeavored to show what might be said on both sides of the question by persons taking different views of it:—

C.—It is some time now since we have had our last meeting. I began to ask, "When shall we three meet again?"

J.—I was in hopes that it would have been "in thunder, lightning and in rain;" but the north-westerns have held off very vexatiously.

S.—I had no such desire. I am like many other old Indians in my feelings, and greatly prefer the hot weather to the cold. I rarely find it too warm. While the cuticle is drenched in a wholesome moisture, the climate is a very tolerable one. It is when there is a hot sun and a sharp easterly wind that the health suffers. There is undoubtedly more

* So called, because the grounds were laid out in a tasteful style, at the suggestion of Lord Auckland's sister, the Honorable Miss Eden.

sickness in the cold weather than the hot. The hot season, particularly on or near the river, when the air comes over the water, is not much more oppressive than the same season in Italy or the South of France.

J.—The worst season in India is the Rains. The lulls between the gales and showers are absolutely awful. I suffer at such times under a kind of waking night-mare.

C.—It was Charles the First, I think, who said that that was the best climate to which men might expose themselves with impunity the greatest number of hours in the day. He thought on this principle that the climate of England was the best in the world. Judging in this way the climate of Bengal is about the worst.

J.—It is perhaps doubtful whether the actual proportion of deaths in England is not more than equal to those in India. The deaths by consumption alone (the English disease) are frightfully numerous.

J.—If I had not been born and bred in England, I do not think I should ever have wished to live there. Some of England's own children have renounced her for more sunny lands. Byron talks of

“The cold and cloudy clime
Where he was born, but where he would not die.”

When I left England some fifteen or sixteen years ago, I was a mere boy. I wept bitterly as the white cliffs receded and grew dim, and I then thought that England was the glory of the earth and the favourite of heaven. The climate, the scenery and the people were all that could be wished for. When I returned after a twelve years' exile, having brooded fondly all that time over all that once enchanted me, I was “electrified with disappointment,” as Campbell has it. I found the people as cold and dismal as the climate, and I wondered how a nation could so completely change its character in so short a time. Before I left the shores of England for the first time, every familiar face seemed the face of a generous friend; and now I saw none but cold and cautious strangers. Selfish cares—mercenary feelings—and the habits and anxieties produced by the necessity of making both ends meet, seemed to have stamped a mean and peculiar expression on every countenance. I had never recognized this melancholy aspect in the crowds that surrounded me in my happy youth. It was the observer, however, that had changed, and not the people. They were neither worse nor better; but my own head had grown clearer and my heart colder.

S—I cannot say that I experienced the same disappointment on my first return to England. I found her the same

dear unrivalled country that I knew in my youth. Though I looked on the hills and vallies with older eyes, my inward vision had not been dimmed, even by a long exile and many heavy afflictions. I had been a good deal in the upper provinces of India, and had travelled over the arid rocks and plains of Bundelcund in the hot winds. I recollect a day that I passed in one of its treeless, herbless, grassless, shadowless plains, that filled me with more horrible images of the infernal regions than are to be met with in the pages of Dante or of Milton. The hot wind was like a blast from hell, and nature withered beneath the light of the sun that scorched her like a ball of fire. In the midst of all this, I suddenly thought of the fresh green meadows of England, and burst into tears.

J.—I visited England in November 1819, and landed on a gloomy drizzling day that seemed better fitted for a converse with the Blue Devils than any day I ever passed in India. The rain continued with slight intermissions for nearly three weeks. I thought I should never again see the blessed sun in heaven. I put up at an inn in the city that had a dark, deadly-looking discolored wall on every side of it. There was no catching a glimpse of the sky without going out in the rain. The scene was so forlorn and dismal in-doors that I preferred catching a consumptive cold without, to dying of the horrors within. The people in the street presented a truly melancholy spectacle. Most of them were so wrapped up that they were "more clothes than men." They seemed exhausted with the weight of their wet garments. Their faces were pale, haggard, anxious. To use a vulgar but expressive phrase, they looked as if they could not help themselves. The streets were covered with a thin, black, slushy mud that spirted up to the walker's middle at every tread. The poor hackney coach horses, with their forlorn down-hanging heads, had their bellies completely coated with it, as if they had swam through that London compound element of earth and water. A more miserable place than England then appeared to me in reality, I never even dreamed of after the most indigestible of suppers.

C.—This conversation is an illustration of Milton's axiom, "The mind is its own place," and "can make a hell of heaven, a heaven of hell." The character of a country depends greatly upon the character of the observer, or his particular mood at the time of observation. What contradictory accounts do different travellers give us of the same places. Some can go from Dan to Beersheba, and find all barren; while others scatter around them the flowers of their own fancy, let them go where they will.

STANZAS TO MY CHILD.

I.

I GAZE on thy sweet face,
 My lightly laughing boy !
 And charms no painter's hand could trace
 Behold in pride and joy.
 While pleasure almost turns to pain,
 (For human hearts may scarce sustain
 Such bliss without alloy,)
 Till tears too sweet for those who grieve
 Gush forth to chasten and relieve !

II.

And e'en when sorrow's hour
 Brings gloom upon my soul,
 And shades o'er Life's dull landscape lour
 Like clouds that slowly roll
 Round solemn Twilight's dusky car,
 Thine image kindles as a star,
 To cheer me and console,
 And dreary thoughts and mournful dreams
 Soon pass like mist 'neath morn'ning beams.

III.

For in that bright blue eye
 Still glow the rays of bliss,
 Like lustre from an azure sky,
 Or realms more fair than this ;
 Though vexed with worldly cares I roam,
 They shall not darken this dear home,
 Nor check the rapturous kiss
 That greets thy fresh and rosy charms
 When clasped within mine eager arms !

IV.

This heart indeed were cold
 To feeling's gentle sway,
 If while thy fairy form I fold,
 And those small fingers play
 Around my neck, thy face the while
 Upraised to catch the wonted smile,
 Mine eye could turn away,
 Or that calm sullen language wear
 That tells of sadness or despair.

V.

I have not darkly roved
 O'er Nature's fair domain,
 Nor gazed on sun-lit scenes unmoved
 In hours of mental pain,
 And far less could my soul disown
 The light round sinless children thrown
 That ne'er can shine again
 When years bring guilt, and life no more
 Is bright and joyous as before.

VI.

I see my own first hours,
 While lingering over thine ;
 I see thee pluck the fresh spring-flowers,
 An artless wreath to twine ;
 The same bright hues their beauty yields
 As those I sought in dewy fields,
 When kindred bliss was mine ;
 And while by memory thus beguiled,
 I almost deem myself a child.

VII.

How oft the phantom Care
 Hath swiftly passed away,
 As some night-bird that may not dare
 The morning's holy ray,
 While half unconsciously mine eye
 Hath drank thy charms, till suddenly
 I felt the fond smile play
 Around my lips, nor could refrain,
 But kissed thee o'er and o'er again !

VIII.

I've watched thy little wiles,
 A thousand times and more,
 And yet they win my ready smiles
 As freely as before ;
 Thy dear, familiar, prattled words
 Are sweeter than the songs of birds
 On some calm sun-lit shore ;—
 Each *new* grace brings as proud surprize
 As lights a star-discoverer's eyes.

IX.

E'en " thrice-told tales " are sweet
That cheerful children tell,
On sounds their lovely lips repeat
The ear for aye could dwell ;
Unlike all other things of earth
Their winning ways and sinless mirth
Still hold us as a spell ;
In every mood, in every hour
They bear the same enchanting power.

X.

Ah ! dearest child, if thou
A child couldst thus remain,
And I for ever gaze as now
On one without a stain
Of earthly guilt or earthly care,
With heart as pure and form as fair
As sainted spirits gain,
Methinks e'en this drear world might seem
A heaven as sweet as man could dream !

XI.

But mortal flowerets grow
Till all their bright tints fade,
And thy maturer bloom must know
The bleak world's tempest-shade :—
Thine eyes a father's fall shall trace,
His form shall sink before thy face,
And when thine heart hath paid
Its tribute brief of natural tears,
Thou'lt seek awhile what soothes and cheers.

XII.

As I now gaze on thee
E'en thou perchance shalt gaze
On one whose smiles of guiltless glee
The same proud bliss shall raise,
Till he to sterner manhood grown
Shall see thee to the grave go down,
And while thy frame decays
Beneath the cold, damp, silent sod,
Shall follow in the track thou'st trod.

XIII.

Alas ! how this dim scene
Is fraught with change and death !
What countless myriads here have been
To breathe a moment's breath,
Then sink beneath that mortal doom
That makes the wide green earth a tomb,
Its flowers a funeral wreath ;
And oh ! what countless myriads more
Shall rise and fall ere Time is o'er !

XIV.

One after one we fill
The darkly yawning grave ;
On Time's vast ocean never still
Thus wave succeedeth wave,
And all that from the wreck of life,
The change, tumult and the strife,
The happiest fate may save,
Is but the memory of a dream,
A name whose glory is a gleam !

XV.

But hence with thoughts like these,
(The present still is ours !)
They come like autumn's blighting breeze
Through Summer's leafy bowers ;
Thy glittering eye and sunny brow
Are all my soul shall gaze on now ;
And when the future lowers,
I'll think of that celestial clime
Where all things own eternal prime !

XVI.

The transitory gloom
Is floating fast away !
I cannot long behold thy bloom
And dream of dull decay ;
And like a sun-burst on the scene
Where April's fitful clouds have been
Is joy's returning ray,
While balm is shed from fancy's wing
Like odours waving spice-boughs fling.

XVII.

Oh, how that fair face glows !
 How that small bosom heaves !
 Those red lips tremble like the rose
 When light airs part the leaves ;
 A sudden laughter fills thine eye,
 And comes as if thou knew'st not why,
 As viewless zephyr weaves
 The dimples shining waters show—
 Like those thy cheeks are wearing now !

XVIII.

Oh ! spirit gladdening sight !
 Oh ! happiness divine !
 To feel a father's sacred right,
 To call such cherub mine !
 A humble name, and lowly state
 Have been, and still may be, my fate,
 Yet how can I repine
 At want of wealth, or fame, or power,
 While blest with this fair human flower !

SONNET.

It is not fear that fills the poet's mind
 With images of death, but love profound
 For all that tread the flower-embroidered ground,
 For all that float upon the wave or wind.
 Such love broods ever on the lot assigned
 To mortal life. The charms of sight and sound—
 Faces divine—green fields—and rills that bound
 O'er pebbles bright, or in dim coverts find
 A tone responsive in the whispering trees,—
 All nature—all mankind—all breathing things,
 Are precious to the Muse. To part from these
 Is pain unspeakable : and death whose wings
 Shut out the sun, and make the warm blood freeze,
 E'en o'er the undying soul a shadow flings.

SUPPOSED NEW DISCOVERY OF THE SCHEME OR GROUND-IDEA OF EACH AND ALL OF SHAKES- PEARE'S DRAMAS.

THE criticism of the present day has a strong leaning to cloudy transcendentalisms. Simplicity and directness are regarded as signs of shallowness. Every critic pretends to see further into a mill-stone than his neighbours, and seems rather to aim at some profound discovery upon which he may establish his own reputation for amazing sagacity, than to meditate a fair and accurate exposition of his author's characteristics. The general opinion, he calls, a *vulgar* one; the epithet being used in its most contemptuous sense.

So much he scorns the crowd, that if the throng
By chance go right, he purposely goes wrong.

This desperate struggle to be original and profound is especially exhibited in all the critiques on Shakespeare with which the press now groans. Even Charles Knight, in his pretty Pictorial Edition of the poet, assumes an air of mysticism, and looking down with contempt on most of his predecessors and contemporaries, seems to think that Coleridge and himself excepted, and one or two foreign critics, with whom he has the modesty to associate himself, no one has a right to assert an independent opinion regarding the works of Shakespeare. This presumption is the more ludicrous and offensive in Charles Knight, because he is after all but a servile echo of Coleridge and Schlegel, except in those very small criticisms, in which, with extraordinary self-glorification, he pretends to put "commas and points exactly right." His new readings are often as fantastically far fetched and erroneous, as the notes of Warburton himself without any portion of the learning or ingenuity of that pugnacious priest.

An article on Shakespeare in the *North British Review* has suggested these remarks. The writer, though too fantastical and pretending, is yet no ordinary person. He is evidently a deep and subtle thinker, though he is tainted with the prevailing ambition to discover something startling. It is now a difficult task for the most ingenious critic to say anything of Shakespeare that is at once new and true; but no one, let his qualifications be what they may, touches upon the subject without at least making the attempt. The critic in the *North British Review* is intensely eager to convince the public that he looks at the works of our great poet from an original point of view; though the

leading peculiarity of his criticism, by his own confession, is merely an amplification of Ulrici's "most remarkable discovery, that each of Shakespeare's plays has for its foundation some moral idea or theme which is reflected and echoed over and over again, with endless variety and profit, in all the characters, expressions, and events of the piece." The English reviewer does full justice to the German critic, but takes care to tell us in a foot-note, that Ulrici's "discovery" was "*re-discovered*" by himself! "He was engaged," he says, "in writing a work upon the subject, when the translation of Ulrici's work came out and first fell into his hands." There is vagueness or mystification in the wording of this note. What does he mean by *re-discovered*? If he had taken the same view before he saw Ulrici's work, he was as much an original discoverer as the German.

But let us see whether Ulrici's discovery, if such it is to be called, was worth all this notice. We think not. We take it, indeed, to be no discovery at all—but what is vulgarly called a mare's nest. The *North British Reviewer* selects the play of the *Merchant of Venice* as an illustration of the German's theory, and cites a great many passages from it to show that the grand central theme or ground-idea, the opposition of the *letter* and *spirit* of the law, and of appearances and realities, is never for a moment lost sight of by the poet. The Reviewer shall introduce the subject in his own words:—

"When we say that the theme of the '*Merchant of Venice*' is the relation of the *letter* to the *spirit* of law, and the various liabilities of man to dwell on the first and to neglect the last, we make but a very crude and general statement. The play itself is the only full and true definition of the theme. There is always a certain amount of falsehood in the ordinary expression of any moral idea; such an idea is, in fact, incapable of direct statement. In this it is that the Shakesperian drama finds its meaning and justification; the moral idea, which must always remain a riddle to words, is soluble in action. The exhibition of this solution has the highest interest and value for us all.

In the first passage of the first scene of the '*Merchant of Venice*' we have an instance of the *letter* or *appearance*, without any corresponding spirit or substance. Antonio's sadness is intentionally inexplicable. In the different judgments of Antonio's friends concerning the probable sources of this sadness, we have a general statement to begin with of the fallibility of all appearances or expressions. When Antonio denies that he is either anxious about his ships, or in love, Salario says—

'Nor in love neither? Then let us say, you are sad
Because you are not merry: and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap, and say you are merry
Because you are not sad. Now by two-headed Janus
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time;
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes,
And laugh, like parrots, at a bagpiper:
And other of such vinegar aspect,
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.'

Bassanio, Lorenzo and Gratiano come in and make further remarks of precisely similar purport. The two last, indeed, leave the stage again immediately after Gratiano has commented upon Antonio's sadness. Bassanio then observes that

"Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice," &c., after which he begins the business of the plot by speaking of his debts, but up to this point the whole aim of the poet, in about 130 lines, is to impress upon us the fact of the general fallibility of appearances, by taking the extreme case of appearances that have no corresponding substance, as the sadness of Antonio, the talk of Gratiano and the characters which he and Salarino allude to in their comment upon Antonio's melancholy. In this play Shakespeare has observed his usual practice of exhibiting the theme, first in its most ordinary and least important forms, and of allowing the true interest to depend upon the gradually increased significance of its application and occurrence in the more rare and momentous events of life. Here we may also remark that the fact of the ultimate identity of all moral good or evil is the cause of the resemblance which obtains between a large class of Shakespeare's characters, namely, those which stand, as it were, upon the outskirts of the plot, reflecting faintly and in the most general way, those qualities which become distinguishable into separate vices or virtues as they come within and help to produce the vortex of the interest. Extreme folly seems to have constituted the ultimate view which was taken by Shakespeare of all moral evils, and it is into this form that all the evils, which separately constitute the themes of the different plays, resolve themselves in the lower and less important characters.

* * * * *

"Scene VII. is a short but very important one, consisting almost wholly of the Prince of Morocco's commentaries upon three caskets of lead, silver and of gold, with their superscriptions, and of the lines which reveal to him his mistake in choosing the last. The bearing of this event upon the central thought of the play is manifest. We quote only the lines discovered in the golden casket :—

' All that glitters is not gold,
Often have you heard that told ;
Many a man his life hath sold
But my outside to behold ;
Gilded tombs do worms infold,
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limb, in judgment old,
Your answer had not been inscroll'd :
Fare you well ; your suit is cold.'

Portia closes this scene by saying—"Let all of his *complexion* choose me so.' Let the reader here remark, that whenever the theme can be stated without the appearance of being directly '*didactic*,' it is so stated. The rhymes contained in the several caskets are examples.

The business of the next scene is the juxta-position of the utterly selfish and mercenary nature of the Jew, with the perfect self-forgetfulness of Antonio in his friendship for Bassanio. The relation of these two characters is very curious. In the whole of Shakespeare's play we meet with no other instances of character—in the one case so hopelessly selfish or sensual, in the other so purely benevolent or spiritual. We repeat, that the main business of this little scene is the highly important apposition of these living exponents of the two poles of the all-pervading idea.

We come now to the choice made by the Prince of Arragon of the silver casket. This scene is crowded with suggestions or open declarations of the theme. The Prince talks of 'the fool multitude that choose by show,' and yet his reason for not choosing the gold casket is the vain and superficial one, that he 'will not jump with common spirits.' In selecting the silver casket he makes a speech which requires no remark :—

' Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
And well said too. For who shall go about
To cozen fortune, and be honourable
Without the stamp of merit ! Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.
O, that estates, degrees, and offices,
Were not derived corruptly ! and that clear honour
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer !

How many then should cover that stand bare !
 How many be commanded that command !
 How much low peasantry would then be glean'd
 From the true seed of honour ! and how much honour
 Pick'd from chaff and ruin of the times
 To be new varnish'd !

The portrait which he finds of the blinking idiot is the true likeness of himself in his pride of self-desert. The scroll in the silver casket is not less pregnant with the idea than that which was discovered by the former suitor. Portia says :—

‘ O these deliberate fools ! when they do choose
 They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.’

And Nerissa, who illustrates the meaning of this and of certain other incidents by her *obvious* mistakes concerning their import, adds,

‘ The ancient saying is no heresy,—
 Hanging and wiving go by destiny.’

Bassanio's advent is now announced. The praises lavished upon his appearance by the servant makes Portia fear that ‘he is some kin to her.’ This scene closes, as did a former one, leaving the choice to constitute a second scene. From this and several other peculiarities of construction, ‘The Merchant of Venice’ derives a breadth and a depth of light and shadow which do not exist to the same extent in any other play of Shakespeare, and which serve to develop the sense of *form* to an extraordinary degree, with results, with a regard to the theme, that cannot be duly appreciated until we come to speak of the construction of the Fifth Act.”

This extract will let the reader into the critic's views. All this flourish of trumpets seems to usher in a very obvious truth,—that Shakespeare, like all other writers who furnish faithful representations of human life, deals largely in the principle of contrast. His characters and scenes exhibit the lights and shades, the good and evil, the letter and the spirit, the truth and falsehood, the realities and the dreams of this so strangely compounded world. It would be an easy task to make the same “discovery” in any tolerably good drama or novel ; nay even in almost any good epic or reflective poem. Take, for example, Young's *Night Thoughts* ; the poem is a collection of strong moral contrasts. They are the lights and shades of the picture.

There was an Italian painter (says Mrs. Jameson), who said that the secret of all effect in colour consisted in *white upon black and black upon white*. How perfectly she adds did Shakespeare understand this secret of effect and how beautifully he has exemplified it in Juliet !

“ So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
 As yonder lady o'er her fellow shows.”

The *Reviewer* observes that the relation between the characters of Shylock and Antonio “is very curious ;” that in the whole of Shakespeare's plays we meet with no other instances of character in the one case so hopelessly selfish or sensual, in the other so purely spiritual and benevolent. We see nothing in this opposition of characters at all curious or uncommon. All dramatic literature necessarily

teems with such contrasts. Moreover Shylock is not wholly selfish or sensual. Even his love of lucre is balanced by his love for his daughter and for his country. He is a fond father and a fervid patriot. Why does he pursue the Christians with such bitter animosity? Because they "hate his sacred nation." Coleridge remarks that the only character in Shakespeare of utter irredeemable baseness is the steward in *Lear*; but even in him there is one good quality—fidelity to his employer.

Our critics are always in extremes. Because a few years ago almost every one treated the poetry of Wordsworth with contempt and laughter, all the periodical reviewers now run into the contrary error and speak of him as one of the demi-gods of verse. They rank him with Milton. Shakespeare was for a long period contemplated as an inspired savage who performed unconscious miracles. It is now the fashion to regard all his beauties as the result of the most elaborate care and the most profound design. This is the cant of criticism. We hate it thoroughly; and wish to Heaven that public critics would speak more directly from their own hearts, and not aim at a spurious sort of fame by heading every new movement, merely because it is a new one.

Ulrici, in his idolatry of Shakespeare, goes so far as to regard his very faults as evidences of the most "artistic wisdom." That Shakespeare made Bohemia a maritime country, that he placed the lions and serpents of Africa in the forest of Arden, that he sent Hamlet to the University of Wittenberg some centuries before that University was established, and made him swear by St. Patrick, and put into the mouth of Richard the Third an allusion to the yet unborn Machiavelli, that he has enabled many school-boys of the present day to correct his chronology and geography—that he has done all this—has been regarded by critics, in general, as so many proofs of his ignorance or carelessness respecting mere matters of fact that have no necessary connection with the vital and more essential characteristics of his works. "But in sober truth," says Ulrici, "they become documents of the most profound artistic wisdom."*

* "In his comedies of Fancy, for example, it was the intention of the poet, by these all-acknowledged blunders, which he had *designedly introduced*, and which, therefore, must no longer be called errors, but poetical fictions, to place the spectator at once in the true position from which alone a work of art ought to be contemplated. He wished to indicate by them that his poesy had its root in the free shifting, marvellous soil of fancy," (too much of our author's criticism has its root in the same soil!) "and that his purpose was to pourtray life, not in its ordinary compact reality, but in a very different perspective, in other colours and shapes, and under a different light and shade, *and thereby to elucidate* its profound and latent significance."—Ulrici. This sort of criticism used to be called *conjectural*; it is now called *æsthetical* criticism!

Augustus William Schlegel makes a remark to the same effect.*

Such is the eagerness to make discoveries in Shakespeare, that nothing would be easier than for a clever literary wag, especially a foreign one, to put the whole herd of critics on a ludicrously wrong scent. If some continental writer, with an unpronounceable and outlandish name were to assert that after years of laborious study, he had discovered that all Shakespeare's dramas were written for some secret political purpose, and that every single line, if viewed in the right light, bore indication of the same tendency, there would be a general opening of the eyes and clapping of the hands amongst English critics.

Some of the French critics in the same spirit once insisted that the ancient poets first fixed upon a moral and then invented a story in illustration of it. In Virgil's *Æneid* they say the poet had two objects in view, the one poetical and the other moral or rather political. The main design was to increase the respect of the people for Augustus and "to encourage, like Homer, the great system of military despotism."

Great poets compose poems because they cannot suppress the spirit within them, and they produce their perfect pictures of life, not so often from deliberate design as from a happy instinctive feeling for truth and nature. Shakespeare, especially, troubled himself little about a pedantic pre-arrangement. He often borrowed from a novel the plot or skeleton of his play and then breathed at once into it the breath of life. Long before a poet is able to elaborate a philosophical or literary scheme, he can paint a landscape in words, express deep feelings in strong language, or give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name. Pope says of himself—

I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came,

and Shakespeare's exquisite "word-notes wild" were at least equally spontaneous. The mechanical part of poetry is soon mastered. Every school-boy, with a little care, can write correct verses. Every Academical Professor of poetry can explain the leading principles of versification. But no professor, no school-boy can teach or learn Shakespeare's music. It is the result of an exquisite instinct that is far beyond the reach of art, and the same exquisite instinct attended the poet into

* The idolatry of Shakespeare has been carried so far of late years, that Drake, and perhaps greater authorities, have been unwilling to acknowledge any faults in his plays. This, however, is an extravagance rather derogatory to the critic than honourable to the poet.—*Hallam*.

the highest regions of thought and fancy. Shakespeare, if he were now on earth, would stare with wonder at those subtle critics, who attribute such studied and profound intentions to every syllable that has fallen from his inspired lips. The unstudied truth and consistency visible in a song of Burns may be traced to the same source in the plays of Shakespeare—pure inspiration. Shakespeare saw life and nature with a poet's eye. He reflected them faithfully upon his page, and probably troubled himself very little about the effect or the moral. He saw guilty ambition—he pictured it in *Macbeth*—he saw desperate jealousy even in noble natures—he pictured it in *Othello*. He leaves his reader to draw the moral, or rather to *feel* it.

Amongst other absurd things said of Shakespeare by very able men, ambitious of originality, is the assertion of Schlegel, that there is an all-prevalent *irony* in his plays. Such fantastical stuff does not deserve a refutation, let it come from whom it may.

The *North British Reviewer* assumes such airs of superiority, and speaks so contemptuously of the "little critics" who are likely to oppose his views, that it would seem rather rash in us, if we were within his reach, to treat his theory with disrespect; but as there are so many thousand miles of water between us, and all that we say is likely to remain a secret to him, we may venture, under the protection of distance and obscurity, to assert that his whole article, though evidently the work of a very able hand, is *Much Ado about Nothing*. He tells us that the extent to which the reader will be able to understand his theory will be in precise proportion to the extent of his knowledge of the human mind and heart and to the depth of his philosophy. This is either insolent presumption or a desperate attempt to enlist the readers' vanity in the critic's favour. With ourselves it is wholly ineffectual. Shakespeare, he says, wrote for a time that is not yet come. The world is too young to understand him. Only the Reviewer and Ulrici have a true idea of his meaning. To state this is to refute it. Shakespeare, if any man ever did, wrote for *all* time and for all classes: not for a particular century, nor for German transcendentalists alone.

The *Reviewer* is astonished that such plays as *Timon of Athens* or *Love's Labour Lost* should be "not only tolerated but praised" by the multitude, a fact that can only be accounted for, he says, by recognizing the existence of an extensive moral cowardice and dishonesty of intellect, for if these plays really contain no more than is commonly seen in them, they ought, according to him, to be regarded as the productions of a madman, for no mind endowed with

"consecutiveness of sanity" could have created them! One would think that no critic endowed with "consecutiveness of sanity" could thus condemn them.* The North British Re-discoverer thinks that all Shakespeare's plays must appear "crude, barbarous, and vacant," without the new key to the meaning. If this be the case, Voltaire was justified in calling our great poet a barbarian who could not endow fixed purposes with intelligible words, for in the drama the transparency of the general intention is a primary merit, and all obscurity is a fatal defect. A play is for the million—not for a clique of critics or philosophers. In a metaphysical or allegorical poem, a veiled meaning may be tolerated, but the drama is intended for immediate effect upon a mixed audience. As Ben Jonson said of his great rival—his art is nature; the truest sort of art.

Itself unseen but in the effect remains.

Shakespeare's plays were not mathematically planned like ships or houses. And yet his productions are works of art; they are characterized in most instances by unity in contrast, and a perfect completeness. He worked in the same spirit in which a great painter works. Without any deliberate selection of objects there is one pervading tone or principle in the painting. So it is in the poem. The consistency or keeping is *instinctive*. The imagination fuses many objects into one complete whole. In the works of inferior artists, where the arrangement is pedantically studied, and where every thing is done by rule, there is nothing but a crowd of unconnected individualities. We have often thought Charles Lamb rather overrated Hogarth, because, as it seems to us, the intention in his pictures is too strongly pronounced. His figures are almost ticketed or labelled; and look like after thoughts introduced individually and at intervals. A picture by Hogarth rarely seems the result of a single clear vision breathed at once upon the canvas. The keeping is true, indeed, to a certain extent, but it is too studiously so, and is ostentatiously forced upon our notice.* It ought to be felt rather than observed, and this is always the case in works of the very highest order of imagination.

* "*Love's Labour Lost* is generally placed I believe at the bottom of the list. There is indeed little interest in the fable, if we can say that there is any fable at all; but there are beautiful coruscations of fancy, more original conceptions of character than in the *Comedy Errors*, more lively humour than in the *Gentlemen of Verona*, more symptoms of Shakespeare's future powers as a comic writer than in either. *Timon* is less read and less pleasing than the great majority of Shakespeare's plays; but it abounds with signs of his genius."—*Hallam's Literature of Europe*.

We lately saw in a newspaper edited by Douglas Jerrold an announcement that the Directory of Exeter Hall had issued a sort of Bull of Excommunication against the readers and admirers of William Shakespeare. This will amuse many and provoke more. Perhaps the laughers are the wisest; for no man of the least reflection can suppose that the fulminations of Bigotry will, in this age of the world, frighten many persons of sound mind from the pages of our greatest poet; and it would seem absurd and idle to lose one's temper or enter into serious argument in favor of Shakespeare individually or of poetry in general with people who can imagine for a moment, that the perusal of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* and *Leir* and *Othello* is a sin involving eternal punishment. Religious Bigotry like Political Despotism is seldom remarkable for much discretion. It is apt to overshoot the mark, and injure its own cause. At this moment when all Europe is inspired with so passionate an admiration of the greatest poet the world has yet produced, the attempt to check the progress of opinion in his favour reminds us of that ludicrous image of inefficiency—Mrs. Partington pushing back the ocean with her mop. The utter vanity and narrow-mindedness of this outcry against the poet will make many truly pious and sensible Christians, hitherto under the influence of Exeter Hall orators, ashamed of their own party. We should not be surprised if some of them were to decline to walk through Coventry with their old companions any longer. Instead of lessening the number of Shakespeare's disciples, there is a probability that the Exeter Hall Company will weaken their own ranks by such transcendant bigotry and folly. Some of the wisest and best of men have been eager to testify their admiration of William Shakespeare, not merely the pride of his own nation but of the civilized world, and yet it seems there are people who would rejoice to blot out his glorious name from the tablets of immortality and bid the hangman make a bonfire of his works. They deem him immoral and irreligious:—a most deplorable mistake! Archbishop Sharp, as we have mentioned in a preceding article, advised all young divines to unite the reading of Shakespeare with the study of the Scriptures, just as John Wesley, the celebrated methodist, recommended his disciples to add to the study of the Bible the perusal of the *Fairy Queen* of Spenser. "The great Saint Chrysostom," says Bishop Warburton, "a name consecrated to immortality by his virtue and eloquence, is known to have been so fond of Aristophanes as to wake with him at his studies and to sleep with him under his pillow; and I never heard that this was objected either to his piety or his preaching, not

even in those times of pure zeal and primitive religion. Yet in respect of Shakespeare's great sense, Aristophanes's best wit is but buffoonery, and in comparison of Aristophanes' freedoms, Shakespeare writes *with the purity of a vestal*." This is the testimony of a Bishop who had studied the poet closely. It is true that Shakespeare has been accused of profanity ; but from this charge he has been nobly vindicated. " From a perusal of Shakespeare," said Coleridge, whose fine Christian feeling is not to be doubted, " I have acquired a habit of looking into my own heart, and have perceived the goings on of my nature ; and confident I am, Shakespeare was A WRITER OF ALL OTHERS THE MOST CALCULATED TO MAKE HIS READERS BETTER AS WELL AS WISER."*

It is true that in a few passages of Shakespeare's plays, something of the grossness of his day is occasionally reflected, but he is wonderfully free from objection on the score of indecency when we consider the language and manners of his time, and compare him with his contemporaries. It has been remarked that at that period even the letters of females in high life were coarser than his writings. And yet Shakespeare had passed much of his time amongst players, a people proverbially free in their manners and conversation. The female parts upon the stage were then performed by boys, and not, as now, by women of unexceptionable habits and fair reputation. The exquisite delicacy of his conceptions of female character is marvellous indeed, when we remember the aspect which female society then wore, and shows with what a happy instinct he could recognize, under the crust of accidental and temporary defects, the true and eternal brightness of woman's nature. For our own part, we hesitate not to declare our opinion (putting aside all allusion to the Bible itself, with which no human composition can be compared without profanity) that the plays of Shakespeare are better fitted to purify the passions through the means of pity and terror, and to show us how truly and wonderfully we are made, than any other works which the world has yet had or is ever likely to have. No moral essay, no metaphysical discourse, no pulpit eloquence so powerfully and healthfully stirs the heart of man as Shakespeare's matchless representations of human life.

* " I have confined myself to set forth the profundity and sublimity of Shakespeare's poetical view of life, which was simply on this account sublime and profound, because it was Christian, and Christian also because it was profound and sublime."—*Ulrich on Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*.

MYSTERIES.

AH ! this were but a weary world
 Without its hopes and fears ;—
 A pool by no light breezes curled
 A cheerless sight appears :
 A smooth interminable plain
 Is sadder than the stormy main ;
 Yet these similitudes would be
 Of life's long, dull monotony,
 If human sighs and human tears
 Ne'er stirred, nor stained the stream of years.

* * * * *

Oh ! God ! there are who madly dare
 To question thine eternal will ;
 Who own this glorious globe is fair,
 Yet mourn permitted ill ;
 And deem it strange almighty power
 Should yield to sin one mortal hour ;
 Or suffer care, and pain, and strife,
 To chequer all the scenes of life ;
 Or let one dreary shadow lie
 Between us and eternity.

They see not what the wise might see,
 (Lost wanderers in the storm !)
 How far above mortality,
 As man above the worm,
 Is He whose awful glory seems
 Impalpable to earthly dreams.
 Yet man to mournful blindness given
 Would pierce the mystic veil of heaven,
 And with delirious boldness scan
 His unseen Maker's secret plan ;
 Forgetful that he could not part
 The curtain of his own proud heart !

THE RIVALS.

I.

I wish, mamma, you'd tell that man
 To keep his money—and his distance ;
 For let him tease me all he can
 He'll never conquer my resistance.
 He slyly pinched my cheek one day—
 (The wretch !) and tried to look most charming,
 While I felt any thing but gay,
 And thought his fondness quite alarming.

II.

“ Come now,” said I, “ I'll test your love ; ”
 [The rich old hunks looked pleased and tender,]
 “ Ah ! Dearest ! ” cried he, “ Darling ! Dove !
 What service could I fail to render ? ”
 “ I care not for your purse or place,”
 Said I, “ for these could charm me never ;
 But grant one favour—hide your face,
 And let us say farewell for ever.”

III.

He stared and stammered—stamped and swore—
 You would have thought he'd kill your daughter—
 'Twas sound and fury—nothing more—
 Except of English words a slaughter.
 At last I heard the dolt exclaim,
 “ I know your heart's in secret chiming,
 The praise of one whose wealth is fame,
 A pale-faced poet, proud of rhyming.”

IV.

“ Take *that* ! ” I cried, and boxed his ear ;
 He paused, and scowled in sullen frenzy ;
 “ Your mother, Miss,” said he, “ shall hear
 Of this, and of your *dear* Mackenzie ! ”
 And then he bolted from the room,
 And banged the door as if he'd break it ;
 But what care I for all his fume ?
 Let one who loves his money take it .

V.

You know, mamma, my heart's my own,
 And that sweet bard the old brute mentioned
 Is but a *friend*. His worth is known.
 No other man, though bribed or pensioned,

Though decked with ribbands, gems, or gold,
 Could ever wake in me the feeling
 With which I silently behold
 His kindled eye, his soul revealing.

VI.

I do not *love* him—but 'tis sweet
 To hear divine words breathed divinely,
 And Oh ! it is a heavenly treat
 To see his face light up so finely !
 What thought is in his forehead high !
 What genius in his glances glowing !
 And really when I hear him sigh,
 I feel as if my life were going !

VII.

I do not *love* him, but I own
 I like his tender verses dearly,
 And somehow when I'm all alone,
 I feel his absence most severely.
 Perhaps, indeed, one day, who knows,
 But in some silent walk and shady,
 He *may* breathe forth a lover's vows,
 And I become a Poet's lady !

VIII.

I wish, mamma, you would not quiz,
 You vex me with your wicked smiling ;
 You think I'm smitten with his phiz,
 And that his Muse is too beguiling ?
 Well, have it all your own way, then,
 And, if it will afford you pleasure,
 I'll own he is the best of men,
 And that his heart would be a treasure.

IX.

“ Behold the gentle minstrel comes !—
 You love each other, and you show it,”
 (Exclaims Mamma,) “ so no more *hums* ;
 Charles, take her !—Mary, here's your poet !—
 Exchange your vows and laugh at sorrow,
 Indulge in love's delicious frenzy,
 And Mary shall be styled to-morrow
 The pretty Mrs. Charles Mackenzie.”

RETROSPECTIONS

[WRITTEN IN INDIA]

I.

'Tis sweet on this far strand,
 When memory charms the fond reverted eye,
 To view that hallowed land
 Where early dreams like sun-touched shadows lie!

II.

The dear familiar forms,
 That caught the fairest hues of happier hours,
 Flash forth through after storms,
 As bursts of light between autumnal showers.

III.

The green-wood's loveliest spot—
 The summer walk—the cheerful winter fire—
 The calm domestic cot—
 The village church with ivy-covered spire—

IV.

Each scene we loved so well—
 With faithful force the mind's true mirror shows ;
 As Painting's mighty spell
 Recals the past, and lengthened life bestows.

V.

But though so brightly beam,
 These distant views, they make the present drear
 By Youth's departed dream,
 Life's onward paths but desolate appear.

VI.

We may not therefore dwell
 Too long and deeply on the dearer past,
 Nor sound, for aye, the knell
 Of pleasures gone and glories overcast.

VII.

Whate'er our lot may be,
 Whatever tints life's varied prospects wear,
 The temper'd breast is free
 From sullen apathy or fierce despair.

VIII.

In fortune's cloudiest hours,
 Within the dreariest regions of the earth,
 Are found both beams and flowers,
 Unless the wanderer's soul betrays a dearth.

IX.

For still, where'er we range,
Are traced the sweet results of virtue's reign ;
Though forms and features change,
Fair thoughts and fine humanities remain.

X.

And he, whose spirit glows
At Nature's charms, shall own in every land
Her glorious aspect shows
The same bright marks of God's creating hand !

SONNETS—TO DEATH.*

I.

LORD of the silent tomb ! relentless Death !
Fierce victor and destroyer of the world !
How stern thy power ! The shafts of fate are hurled
By thine unerring arm ; and swift as breath
Fades from the burnished mirror,—as the wreath
Of flaky smoke from cottage hearths up-curled
Melts in cerulean air,—as sear leaves whirled
Along autumnal floods,—as o'er the heath
The quick birds rise and vanish,—so depart,
Nor leave a trace of their delusive light,
The meteor-dreams of man ! Awhile the heart,
Of eager Folly swells—his bubbles bright
Float on the stream of time—but ah ! thy dart
Soon breaks each glittering spell—and all is night !

II.

Insatiate Friend ! at thy blood-dropping shrine,
In vain unnumbered victims wait thy will.
The life-streams of the earth thy thirst of ill
Shall never quench, till that bright morning shine
That bursts the sleep of ages. All repine
At thy dread mandates, and thy terrors thrill
The hero and the sage, though pride may still
The voice that would reveal them. Hopes divine,
Of faith and virtue born, alone may cheer
Mortality's inevitable hour.
Nor phrensiel prayer, nor agonizing tear,
May check thine arm, or mitigate thy power.
Ruin's resistless sceptre is thy dower,—
Thy throne, a world—thy couch, Creation's bier !

* Written to illustrate an engraving in the second edition of a work entitled
"Death's Doings."

THE RIVER VOYAGE IN BENGAL.

Slow steals our Indian boat
Up rain-fed river wide ;
Against the breeze we float,
Against the rushing tide ;
And breast the strife of wind and stream
Without the conquering aid of steam.

II.

Swart forms in lengthened file
Along the green bank wind,
The tight-drawn goon* the while
To shouldered bamboos joined ;—
Patiently 'neath the burning sun
On plod they till the day is done.

III.

A toilsome journey theirs,
An easy voyage ours,
And yet fantastic cares
Have equalized the dowers ;
Theirs the light heart though heavy limb,
But ours the wearied soul and dim,

SONNET—FREEDOM.†

THERE is exulting pride, and holy mirth,
In Freedom's kindling eye! Her radiant smile
Profoundly thrills this fair imperial isle,
The Queen of nations! Glory of the earth!
Impassioned orisons are now breathed forth,
And lofty aspirations. Phantoms vile
That chill the feeble spirit, and defile
The springs of thought and feeling in their birth,
Fade like the mists of morn, and lose the power
That made us willing slaves. For reason's light
Is bursting through the clouds that darkly lower
And hide the face of Heaven! O'er the night
Of slumbering millions—oh! transcendent hour!
The sun of liberty is rising bright!

* The rope from the mast head to the trackers on shore.

† Written in England.

COMPLAINT OF WANT OF MEMORY.

NOTHING is more common than the confession of a defect of memory, which may be taken as a proof that it is not generally considered one of the nobler faculties of the mind. Men rarely acknowledge, even to themselves, a deficiency in any quality which ranks highly in their own estimation, or which they suppose to be essential to the dignity or grace of their intellectual character. People sometimes complain of the want of extrinsic advantages, such as a large income or a handsome equipage, because these things form no portion of their own moral or mental being. They conceive that they have higher and less equivocal claims to the respect of their fellow-creatures ; and while railing at Fortune, enjoy a secret consciousness, and sometimes even venture on a pretty open implication, that their merit is deserving of a better fate. Men are discontented with every thing but their own minds and persons. They never complain that nature has made them silly or ill-featured. In some respects what a happy circumstance is that law of our nature by which, with the clearest eyes for the defects of others, we are blinded to our own ! The feeble-minded and the deformed in body would shrink into themselves with bitter shame and forlorn dependency, if they were to see their own deficiency as they appear to others. The perpetual mirror of self-reflection would drive them to despair. It is remarkable that in proportion as nature is niggard in real gifts, she is liberal in those of fancy. Fools and dwarfs are proverbially vain. When we consider how much of the happiness of life depends upon our being well deceived, it is perhaps scarcely consistent with a humane philosophy to object to the self-complacency of the meanest human creature in existence, especially as he is in no degree answerable for his natural defects.* If we lower a man in his own esteem, we not only deprive him of the chief source of consolation amidst the positive ills of life, but render him less capable of a noble sentiment or a generous exertion. It is only when egotism leads to selfishness and arrogance, that it becomes necessary to repress it. The principle, however, of self-approval is so deeply ingrafted in our system, that it is impossible to eradicate

* Doth any one doubt, that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves ?—*Baron.*

it. By terribly severe and caustic handling, its growth may be checked for a season, but it cannot be utterly destroyed. The cherished weed shoots out again in defiance of every obstacle, and with renewed force and freshness.

As no man wilfully depreciates his own character in matters which he thinks materially affect its influence over others, the frequent complaint of the want of memory is, as I have already intimated, rather a slight to that faculty than an acknowledgment of its value. People are often ready to resign all pretensions to it for the praise of candour, because they think they can well afford the sacrifice. A weakness in this faculty is not thought any indication of a correspondent weakness in the higher powers of the mind. On the contrary, many persons have a notion that an exact and vigorous memory is generally associated with a feeble judgment and a cold and barren imagination. Pope has sanctioned this opinion in his *Essay on Criticism*.

" Thus in the soul while memory prevails
The solid power of understanding fails ;
Where beams of warm imagination play
The memory's soft figures melt away."

Those who have weak memories and who wish to be reconciled to their misfortune, should peruse Montaigne, who is perpetually informing his readers of his singular incapability of mental retention. No one will dispute the acuteness and power of that most delightful essayist ; and indeed it is sufficiently obvious, notwithstanding all his lamentations on the subject of his memory, that he is by no means dissatisfied with the general character of his own intellect. Montaigne's Confessions, for such his essays may be called as justly as the egotistical ebullitions of Rousseau, may be adduced as a proof of the utter impossibility of a man's regarding himself with any thing like that genuine impartiality of judgment with which he may be regarded by others. He never tells us any thing which he thinks will really injure him greatly in our estimation. Every little error is eagerly followed up by some redeeming virtue. It is true that both Montaigne and Rousseau have dared to communicate to the world several mean and ludicrous passages in their history ; but this may have been done partly with a proud consciousness that their characters would not suffer by such comparative sunspecks, and partly to obtain the more credit for their self-commendations. Still, however, Montaigne's egotism is nearly as candid as is possible to human nature, and he often seems more likely to have deceived himself than to have had any intention to deceive his readers. His constant complaint of a want of memory has been thought the more remarkable on

account of the quantity of anecdotes and quotations that crowd his pages. They are almost as full of learned illustrations as Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. His French editor, however, (Peter Coste), has explained this apparent contradiction. In the first place he is said to have fallen into innumerable errors respecting names, dates, and persons, and in the next place he appears to have added illustration after illustration to his *Essays* while in manuscript, and for every new edition, just as he met with suitable materials in the course of his extensive reading. Montaigne expresses much the same opinion of the faculty of memory as Pope does. "In my country," says the former, "when they would signify that a man is void of sense, they say that he has no memory; and when I complain of this defect of mine, they reprove me, and do not think I am in earnest in accusing myself of being a fool; for they do not discern the difference betwixt memory and understanding, in which they make me worse than I really am; for, on the contrary, we rather find by experience that *a strong memory is liable to be accompanied with a weak judgment*."* He consoles himself in a very characteristic way, with the reflection, that in proportion to the extent of this defect of memory, the more powerful are his other faculties. He remarks also that if his memory had been better, he would have been apt to rest his understanding and judgment on the wisdom of other men, instead of exerting his own natural powers.

I cannot help thinking, that Montaigne and Pope† have mistaken the nature of memory in its connection with other faculties of the mind. It is to be doubted whether any great powers of intellect are consistent with a feeble memory. This faculty was personified by the ancients as the mother of the Muses. Even Montaigne himself, in alluding to the anecdote of Messala Corvinus having been two years without any trace of memory, observes that a privation of this faculty, if absolute, must destroy all the functions of the soul. He also quotes the saying of Cicero, that "the memory is the receptacle and sheath of all science." Rogers has paid it a similar compliment.

"Ages and climes remote to thee impart
What charms in genius and refines in art
Thee, in whose hands the keys of Science dwell,
The pensive Portress of her holy cell."

* It is a noted observation that a good or comprehensive memory is seldom connected with a good judgment.—*Lord Kames*.

† Pope himself had an excellent memory. It was "so tenacious and local, that he could directly refer to any particular passage in a favourite author."

Montaigne did injustice to his own memory. He only reckoned his sins of forgetfulness, and did not balance them with his remembrances.* He tells us that he was accustomed to forget the names of his servants, and those domestic matters which every body around him remembered with the utmost ease and distinctness. He did not consider how many things there were which *he* remembered and which *they* forgot. Men of genius forget things which the vulgar remember, and remember those which leave no impression on ordinary minds. The poet who in ten minutes will forget where he has placed his hat and walking stick, will remember in what book he met with a beautiful sentiment or expression ten years ago. He has a better memory than those who laugh at his forgetfulness, but it is employed on subjects with which they are not familiar. People remember only those things in which they take an interest. The trader remembers the state of the market, the poet the state of literature. Let them exchange the subject of their attention, and they will both complain of a want of memory. Scott† is said to have possessed extraordinary powers of retention—but what were the things that he most easily retained?—specimens of his own favourite art. He doubtless forgot other matters that interested him less, in the same way that a dull prosaic man

* Marmontel observes, in his *Memoirs*, that he had a great desire to learn, but nature had refused him the gift of memory. He admits, however, that though *the words* left no trace upon his mind, he retained the *sense* of what he read.

Rousseau repeatedly complains of his want of memory. But he exaggerated the defect; for no man with such a feeble memory as he represents his own to have been, could have gathered and retained a fiftieth part of his knowledge.

† Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, gives a curious proof of Scott's retentiveness. I take the following from the Shepherd's "Familiar Anecdotes":—"He, and Skene of Rubislaw, and I were out one night about midnight, leistering kippers in Tweed, about the end of January, not long after the opening of the river for fishing, which was then on the tenth, and Scott having a great range of the river himself, we went up to the side of the Rough-haugh of Elibank; but when we came to kindle our light, behold our peat was gone out. This was a terrible disappointment, but to think of giving up our sport was out of the question, so we had no other shift save to send Rob Fletcher all the way through the darkness, the distance of two miles, for another fiery peat.

The night was mild, calm, and as dark as pitch, and while Fletcher was absent, we three sat down on the brink of the river, on a little green sward which I never shall forget, and Scott desired me to sing them my ballad of 'Gilman's cleuch.' Now, be it remembered, that this ballad had never been printed. I had merely composed it by rote, and on finishing it three years before, had sung it once over to Sir Walter. I began it, at his request, but at the eighth or ninth stanza I stuck in it, and could not get on with another verse, on which he began it again, and recited it every word from beginning to end. It being a very long ballad, consisting of eighty-eight stanzas, I testified my astonishment, knowing that he had never heard it but once, and even then did not appear to be paying particular attention. He said he had been out with a pleasure party as far as the opening of the Frith of Forth, and, to amuse the company, he had recited both that ballad and one of Southey's (*The Abbot of Aberbrothock*), both of which ballads he had only heard once from their respective authors and he believed he recited them both without misplacing a word."

would remember the most dry details and forget the most delightful verses. In Scott's *Autobiography*, (published by Lockhart,) he thus speaks of his memory—"But this memory of mine was a very fickle ally, and has through my whole life acted upon its own capricious motions, and might have enabled me to adopt old Beattie of Mickledale's answer, when complimented by the reverend divine on the strength of the same faculty :—'No, Sir,' answered the old borderer, 'I have no command of my memory. It only retains what hits my fancy, and, probably, Sir, if you were to preach to me for two hours, I should not be able when you finished to remember a word you had been saying.'"

Scaliger tells us that in his youth he could repeat 100 verses after having once read them. It is said that Dr. Leyden had so strong a memory, that he could repeat correctly a long Act of Parliament or any similar document after a single perusal. There is an anecdote of an English gentleman, whom the king of Prussia placed behind a screen, when Voltaire came to read him a new poem of considerable length. The gentleman afterwards perplexed the poet by asserting, in jest, that the poem was his, and repeating it word for word as a proof of the truth of his assertion. Locke in his description of memory (which description, as Campbell observes, is "absolutely poetical,"*) mentions that it is recorded of "that prodigy of parts, Monsieur Pascal, that till the decay of his health had impaired his memory, he forgot nothing of what he had done, read, or thought in any part of his rational age." It is said that the admirable Crichton was similarly gifted, and could repeat backwards any speech he had made. Magliabecchi, the Florentine Librarian, could recollect whole volumes, and once supplied an author from memory with a copy of his own work of which the original was lost. Spence records the observation of Pope, that Bolingbroke had so great a memory, that if he was alone and without books, he could refer to a particular subject in them, and write as fully on it as another man would with all his books about him. Woodfall's extraordinary power of reporting the debates in the House of Commons without the aid of written memoranda is well known. During a debate he used to close his eyes and lean with both hands upon his stick, resolutely

* The following passage bears out Campbell's praise :—"The mind very often sets itself on work in search of some hidden idea, and turns as it were the eye of the soul upon it; though sometimes too they start up in our minds of their own accord, and offer themselves to the understanding; and very often are roused and tumbled out of their dark cells into open day-light by turbulent and tempestuous passions, our affections bringing ideas to our memory, which had otherwise lain quiet and unregarded."

excluding all extraneous associations. The accuracy and precision of his reports brought his newspaper into great repute. He would retain a full recollection of a particular debate a fortnight after it had occurred, and during the intervention of other debates. He used to say that it was put by in a corner of his mind.

It is sometimes more easy to exert the memory than to suppress it. "We may remember," says Felton, "what we are intent upon ; but with all the art we can use we cannot knowingly forget what we would. Nor is there any *Aetna* in the soul of man but what the memory makes."*

Mere abstraction, or what is called absence of mind, is often attributed very unphilosophically to a want of memory. I believe it was La Fontaine, who, in a dreaming mood, forgot his own child, and after warmly commending him, observed how proud he should be to have such a son. In this kind of abstraction, external things are either only dimly seen or are utterly overlooked ; but the memory is not necessarily asleep. In fact, its too intense activity is frequently the cause of the abstraction. This faculty is usually the strongest, when the other faculties are in their prime ; and fades in old age, when there is a general decay of mind and body. Old men, indeed, are proverbially narrative, and from this circumstance, it sometimes appears as if the memory preserves a certain portion of its early acquisitions to the last, though in the general failure of the intellect, it loses its active energy. It receives no new impressions, but old ones are confirmed. The brain seems to grow *harder*. Old images become *fixtures*.

It is a stale proverb that great wits have short memories, and that small wits have long ones. Truth demands, however, that the saying should be reversed. It is not to be denied that extraordinary powers of memory have been often found in the possession of the dullest minds. Jedidiah Buxton, after seeing Garrick perform, was asked what he thought of the player and the play. "Oh," he said, "he did not know, he had only seen a little man strut about the stage and repeat 7,956 words." He could remember the number of words, because he took an interest in numerical calculations ; but he forgot the poetry, and saw nothing in the actor's art. So there are men who recollect dates and names, and forget things and persons. When a mind of very inferior range concentrates its whole power in the faculty of memory, and exerts that faculty on some peculiar class

† Of all afflictions taught a lover yet
'Tis sure the hardest science—to forget.

Pope.

of objects, those observers will inevitably be puzzled who do not sufficiently connect the result with the process by which it is effected.

Nemonica, of the art of memory, was studied by some of the ancients, and attempts have been made to revive it. Mr. Feinaigle, a German, gave instruction in this art in Paris about the beginning of the present century; and as a reply to hostile critics he exhibited the progress of fifteen of his pupils. After they had been tried in various ways, one of the pupils desired the company to give him "a thousand words without any connection whatsoever and without numerical order; for instance, the word *astronomer*, for No. 62; *wood*, for No. 188; *lovely*, for No. 370; *dynasty*, for No. 23; *David*, for No. 90, &c. &c., till all the numbers were filled; and he repeated the whole (though he heard these words without order and but once) in the numerical order; or he told what word was given against any one number, or what number any one word bore." But a system of arbitrary association or artificial memory, though it may serve to prove how much a particular faculty is capable of improvement, is more plausible than useful; for to cultivate any one power of the mind to such an extreme degree, is to destroy the balance of the intellectual powers. To be the brilliant pupil of a Feinaigle, a man must give up every other object, and improve one of his faculties at the expense of all the rest. Fuller advises us not to overburthen the memory, and not to make so faithful a servant a slave. "Remember," says he, "that Atlas was weary. Have as much reason as a camel, to rise when thou hast thy full load. Memory is like a purse, if it be over-full that it cannot shut, all will drop out." The same writer makes a ludicrous observation that "Philosophers place memory in the rear of the head; and it seems the mine of memory lies there, because, there men naturally dig for it, scratching it when they are at a loss." People as often strike the forehead under the same circumstances.

If men who complain of feeble powers of retention were to cultivate their memory with the same assiduity with which they cultivate their other faculties, they would soon find that it would keep up an equal pace with the general advance of mind. Few people have given it a fair trial, and still fewer know the extent to which it may be invigorated and improved. William Hutton divided a blank book into 365 columns, and resolved, as an experiment, to recollect, if possible, an anecdote of his past life, to fill up each division. He was astonished at the success of his plan, and contrived to fill up 355 columns with his different reminiscences. What a delightful treasure are such recovered relics of the past! What a

triumph over time ! It is a kind of immortality. Without memory, life would be a daily death ; and would be not more brief than desolate. How ignorantly then has this faculty been undervalued ! It is as it were the very foundation of genius. Wit and fancy are furnished by the memory with the materials for analogy, combination, or contrast. It is also more closely connected with the imaginative faculty than is generally supposed, and is sometimes even unconsciously confounded with it. People are as apt to say that they *fancy* they see a particular object as that they *remember* it.

The past is tinged with a soft twilight lustre. It is this colouring which makes it seem so much more delightful than the present.

'Tis *distance* lends enchantment to the view,
And robes the mountains in its azure hue.

The far-off landscape is not more lovely to the corporeal sight than are distant objects to the inward eye. They are alike steeped in beauty. But the divine power of memory is incomparably more precious than the pleasures of external vision. It is independent of time and place. It is like a fairy enchanter, and can conjure up spring flowers in a wintry desert, and reflect a magic light on the dreariest moments of existence. It resembles, in some respects, a glorious instrument which requires but a single air-like touch and its "linked sweetness, long drawn out," enthral the soul with ineffable delight. Its rich music is like a river "that wanders at its own sweet will" through some romantic valley.

Mr. Rogers has beautifully described the associating principle :

"Lulled in the countless chambers of the brain,
Our thoughts are linked by many a hidden chain.
Awake but one, and lo, what myriads rise !"

They who call themselves practical philosophers, and talk with contempt of the pleasures of imagination, are strangely ignorant of our nature. The *literal* forms an extremely small, and by far the least precious portion, of our enjoyments. The past and the future are but dreams. Even the present is rife with doubt, mystery and delusion, and the few dull objects that remain uncoloured with the hues of imagination are scarcely worthy of a thought. All men complain of the shortness of life, but a cold and dry philosophy would make it shorter still. It would confine its limits to the passing moment, that dies even in its birth ; for it is only in such a pitiful span that the little which is really *literal* in

life can at all exist. That moment's predecessor is dead—its successor is unborn—and all that is actual or material in its own existence is as a drop in the ocean, or as a grain of sand on the sea-shore.

A supposed want of memory is often nothing more than a want of method. Desultory readers and thinkers generally complain of imperfect memories. The reason is, that their thoughts are in a state of chaos. Thus Montaigne, who was irregular and capricious in his studies, though his memory was probably naturally a good one, was perplexed with vague and confused remembrances. Those who run from one subject to another of the most opposite and uncongenial kinds, receive, of course, but very imperfect and transitory impressions. Southey, though an imaginative writer, did not complain of want of memory, because he was singularly regular and methodical in his studies. Coleridge may have done so, because his thoughts were dream-like and indistinct; but he no doubt recollected the wildest visions and most romantic tales with greater facility and correctness than the generality of mankind, though he could not perhaps have carried a domestic pecuniary account in his head from one street to another. When a man finds that he forgets those things in which he takes a deep interest and which other persons who take less interest in them remember, he may then—but not till then—complain of want of memory. But as no man can remember all things, he must be satisfied to confine the exertions of his memory within a chosen range, and to retain only those things which are the dearest to his heart and the most congenial to his mind.

EVENING CLOUDS.

[A FRAGMENT.]

A GLORIOUS sight ! The sun is in the sea,
 But o'er its liquid cell yon cloud-arch gleams
 With lambent fire—fit bridge for forms of air !
 On either side, like green paths dropped with gold,
 Or cowslip-covered fields in dewy light,
 The glittering vapours lie.—But ah ! how vain
 To breathe this feeble language o'er a scene,
 So like a gorgeous vision ! Every tint
 And shadowy form that charms the poet's eye
 Now mocks his failing art !

THE ADOPTED SON.

[A NORTH AMERICAN ANECDOTE.]

I.

A FAIR youth 'neath a foreign sky
 Stood calmly 'midst the foe ;
 One red man raised his hatchet high,
 Another bent his bow.

II.

A double death, through heart and brain,
 Threats that young hero true,
 Though pale his brow, his lips retain
 Proud curve and ruddy hue.

III.

The arrow drawn unto the head—
 The hatchet in the air—
 An instant more, the life-flood red
 Shall stain his flaxen hair.

IV.

Oh, wondrous movement of the heart—
 At nature's soft surprize !
 Behold the elder savage start—
 The tears are in his eyes !

V.

His loose bow drops—a life is gained—
 He breathes a quick command—
 His comrade's hatchet shines unstained,
 And sinks his slackened hand.

VI.

“ The stranger's son is fair and brave,”
 The old man said, and sighed,
 “ My heart is vacant—in the grave
 Now sleeps a father's pride.”

VII.

“ Be mine—be mine, thou noble youth !
 Thy blood shall not be shed,
 So thou replace with filial truth
 The long-lamented dead.”

VIII.

They lead the fair-haired captive now
To woods and waters wide ;
He learns to bend the hunter's bow,
The light canoe to guide.

IX.

Old Winter gone, and Spring returned,
The red men sought again
The foreign tents, and fiercely yearned
The battle-axe to stain.

X.

The chieftain took the youth aside,
And shed a stern man's tears ;
" My son," he said, " thou canst not hide
Thy true heart's hopes and fears.

XI.

" Beyond our woods and lakes and streams
Thy home-sick fancy strays,
And other faces haunt thy dreams,
And scenes of other days.

XII.

" Thy debt to me is more than paid
While grateful love survives—
Thou would'st not hurt this old grey head
To save a thousand lives.

XIII.

" I gave thee life—I give thee more—
A boon diviner far—
Thy freedom,—mine be as before
A sky without a star.

XIV.

" The sun divides the cloud of night,
But mine it cannot part,
And though the Spring seem warm and bright,
'Tis Winter in my heart.

XV.

" In yonder white-walled camp is one
Whose claim I must not share ;—
Go—that *his* soul may feel the sun
And Spring's delightful air !"

THE LIFE-DEBT PAID.

[A NORTH AMERICAN ANECDOTE.]

I.

WORD followed word—frown answered frown—
 Out-burst the tempest dire—
 Like meteors swift bright war-blades shone,
 And dark eyes flashed like fire !

II.

Those foes were friends—from days of yore
 Seemed one their double life—
 Yet in the fraction of an hour
 Their hearts were turned to strife.

III.

Though fiercely fought those warriors twain,
 Soon ceased their struggle dread ;—
 A dimmed axe smokes with blood and brain—
 Low lies a lifeless head !

IV.

That sight hath touched the victor's heart,
 So noble though so stern,
 Yet none may see the tear-drop start,
 Or sign of care discern.

V.

But grief is on his soul.—Before
 The dead man's home he stands ;—
 “ Friends of my friend ! *his* life is o'er,
 But *mine* is in your hands.

VI.

“ As friendship's blood my weapon stains
 The slayer's shall be shed ;
 Oh, that the life within these veins
 Might pass into the dead !

VII.

“ I will but ask a moon's reprieve,
 To range the woods once more,
 Lest one who ne'er made mortal grieve
 Should want her winter store.”

VII.

The mourners signed their grave assent—
 The moon rolled quickly by—
 Motionless as a monument
 Stands one prepared to die.

IX.

The stern crowd whisper—" *It is well.*"
 The sharp axe riseth now—
 Oh ! never hideous death-stroke fell
 Upon a calmer brow !

STANZAS.

I.

How beautiful are hill and dale, and meadow, grove and river !
 The bright waves clash with silver sound, the green leaves shine
 and quiver.
 I hear the sheep-bell's distant tone, the birds are loud and gay,
 And fragrance floating on the breeze proclaims approaching
 May !

II.

How beautiful are hill and dale, and meadow, grove, and river !
 Methinks on this Arcadian ground 'twere bliss to dwell for ever ;
 Not fairer hues could Fancy's self to this sweet scene impart,
 To charm the painter's raptured eye or poet's panting heart !

III.

How beautiful are hill and dale, and meadow, grove and river !
 Oh ! what a rich domain hath man ! How bounteous is the
 Giver !
 If from this earthly paradise might care and sin be driven,
 Oh ! who for sweeter home would yearn, or seek a happier
 heaven ?

ELEGIAC STANZAS.

I.

OH ! sweet departed Saint !
 If aught of earth could reach thine ear,
 Love's fevered sigh, and sorrow's ceaseless plaint,
 Might wake thy tenderest tear !

II.

Not that my saddened heart
 Would stain thee now with kindred woe,
 Or bid thy spirit's sinless dreams impart
 A less ethereal glow !

III.

But, still, the thought of pain,
 That we on earth shall meet no more,
 Hath agonized a breast whose griefs disdain
 All that would peace restore !

IV.

Oh ! desolate and cold !
 Hope's lingering beam is quenched at last,—
 The trusting mind futurity controlled
 Now dwells but on the *past* !

V.

O'er this deserted scene,
 Where'er my wandering eye may turn,
 Rise long-remembered spots where thou hast been,
 But never shalt return !

VI.

The fragrant noon-tide grove,
 The moon-light's lone and silent bowers,
 The sweet haunts once of ecstasy and love,
 But breathe of happier hours !

VII.

I seek thine early tomb
 With sad and unavailing tears,
 While echo wakes amid the cheerless gloom,
 The voice of other years !

CRITICISM OF THE DAY AND THE POETRY OF TENNYSON.

THE *North British Review* has an article on Literary Men and Social Questions. The Reviewer divides society into three classes, the learned or literary class, the moneyed class, and the *prolétaires* or working men. This is a rather fantastical and imperfect classification; there are vast numbers of persons who have no place in either of these classes. The Reviewer, however, is clearly a man of much thought, sagacity and talent, and makes many sound and excellent observations on the state of literature. He remarks that literary men and *prolétaires* have many points of resemblance in their mode of life. Both classes, he says, have one common characteristic—that of pecuniary *insouciance*. “A literary and a working man both attack a question broadside by force of general human desires and instincts; whereas a moneyed or mercantile man, who ‘has a stake in the country,’ is for the most part determined in his judgments by those established facts of society, and those rules of conventional routine which prescribe the limits of the practicable.” Hence, he says, it may be affirmed, there are a greater number of solutions of important questions, and a greater number of admitted maxims and principles, common to literary men and the working classes, than there are common either, on the one hand, to literary men and men of property, or, on the other, to men of property and the people at large.

It is very true that literary men and day-labourers are equally improvident. They both live from hand to mouth, and seldom think of saving their earnings; and men who do not make money their God, their all in all, but regard it only as the means of providing for the day that is passing over them, when that object is gained, have their thoughts and affections more free for those questions which involve their interests as human beings apart from accidental distinctions than those who give up all their faculties to the preservation or enlargement of their fortunes. The labouring classes, even when only superficially educated, are far more open to the fascinations of the poet than either misers or money-makers. As education spreads amongst artisans and day-labourers, the influence of literature will be rapidly extended, for they form an audience so extensive and important, and are so naturally disposed to side with literary men against the aristocracies of birth and property, that the majority of authors already begin to regard them with a degree of respect and affection such as highly intellectual natures have rarely hitherto

exhibited towards their fellow-creatures in the lower walks of life.

Even publishers who are pretty quick in observing the intellectual changes of the age in which they live, have long ceased to look upon literature as a luxury peculiar to the rich and noble. Expensive quartos have altogether vanished ; and the object of the "trade" now is not to profit by large prices from a "fit audience though few," but to profit still more largely by so lowering the cost of their materials as to bring them within the reach of the greatest number of purchasers. It is discovered at last, that those of the humbler classes, who could read and write, were not restrained from the cultivation of their minds, and an indulgence in literature by a natural preference for vulgar pleasures, but were driven to the ale-house because the booksellers' shops were closed to them by the enormous prices of books rendered unnecessarily bulky and expensive.

This happy change has certainly had the effect of bringing literary men and the poorer classes into closer communication, and authors are now identifying their interests with those of the people. The literary advertisement-columns in the daily papers teem with notices of new books devoted to subjects of vital importance to men in the lower ranks of life. Our prose literature has thus become more simple and practicable, and *utility*, rather than amusement or ornament, is chiefly aimed at.

But it is very remarkable, and we wonder it did not strike the sagacious writer before us, that, while our prose literature is becoming more and more suited to the atmosphere of our daily life, our poetry is running more and more into the abstract, the ideal, the metaphysical, the mystical, and the *incomprehensible*. A similar spirit pervades the criticism of the day on all works of poetry and pure literature. A really simple, direct, and unaffected style in these departments is regarded as an indication of poverty and shallowness of mind. The most miserable rhymester now aims at the remote. Even the Corn-law Rhymers, Ebenezer Elliott, though a vigorous-minded man, though "one of the people," though he was called the poet of the poor, rarely wrote with transparency and ease. Monekton Milnes has published "Verses for the People" that should have been called Riddles for the People. All our poetry now is metaphysical and obscure and transcendental. It is a false taste—a fashion that cannot last. Our posterity will demand truth and nature. They will ask for such verses as those of Burns and Shakespeare : not for such verses as those of Tennyson and Shelley, which are often a hard study for the most learned readers.

It is fortunate for mankind that the ultimate fate of all literature is by no means dependent on the caprices and mistakes of critics, who now praise nothing but what is dreamy, extravagant, and dim. The public are the final judges of the true and the beautiful in art, and it depends upon their decision whether poems or pictures shall live or die. The poetry which the world has hitherto most warmly admired and most anxiously preserved, has not been of the sort which could be justly described as *metaphysical*.

A *Westminster Reviewer*, with a bias of mind quite out of keeping with the usual utilitarianism of the periodical in which he writes, is in raptures with Tennyson's *metaphysical* tendencies, and seems almost to imply, that no poetry which is direct and simple, can be of the highest order.* If this be really the Reviewer's meaning, it is strange indeed that a man of his evident talent should entertain so false a doctrine. "The poetry of the last forty years," he says, "already shews symptoms of life in exact proportion as it is imbued with this science," (metaphysics).—"The most important department," he adds, "in which metaphysical science has been a pioneer for poetry, is in the *analysis of particular states of mind*." This is not only a very odd theory, but a very dangerous one, for it is calculated to encourage our young poets to direct their efforts rather to the head than to the heart of the reader.† If this sort of criticism be much encouraged, our minstrels will become ashamed to trust themselves to nature, and will attempt to outvie the "metaphysical poets" on whom Dr. Johnson has bestowed so acute and able a criticism in his *Life of Cowley*. But

* Alfred Tennyson is unquestionably a poet of true genius. His fancy is exquisitely rich and subtle, but he is too fond of the quaint, the mystical, and the extravagant. That he can exhibit rare power and felicity when he trusts to nature and tasks his genius fairly, is evidenced in his pathetic poem of *Mariana*, and his *Recollections of the Arabian Nights*, which breathe a truly oriental spirit. There is no living poet who might not be justly proud of these productions, and it is melancholy indeed to find a man, who can write so admirably, induced, from whatever motive, to compose and publish such deplorable inanities as the lines to "O Darling Room." We shall presently quote some of the poems alluded to.

† Our living poets seem to have borrowed the taste for metaphysics from the Germans, with whom, as Ulrich confesses, philosophical pretensions have become an infectious disease; "and yet," he says, "philosophical heads, as Parmenides, Empedocles, Plato, Seneca, Herder and Lessing, were not exactly the best poets. For philosophy stands in the same relation to art, as reflection and speculation do to immediate living intuition and certainty." "If," he adds, "the poet habituates himself to the philosophical *mode* of thought, he must, of necessity, lose in poetic beauty, vigor, and vividness, as is proved by the cases of Schiller, and of Goethe in his later works. However, it does not follow because Shakespeare had *studied no form* of philosophy, and was not master of the philosophical forms of thought, that he was therefore unphilosophical. If the prerogative of the philosopher be the objective clearness, the depth and breadth of his self-consciousness—so far, that is, as philosophy is essentially nothing more than the essence of humanity—then in this sense has Shakespeare exhibited an unfathomable depth of philosophy."

after all, the public will not easily be persuaded to prefer a Donne* to a Burns. False theories never last long, and truth and nature always return into favour again.

Analysis is no more essential to poetry than to painting. It is true that a great poet must have a knowledge of the mind and heart of man, just as a great painter of the human figure must have a knowledge of anatomy; but neither the poem nor the picture should palpably indicate or teach the science, because instruction in metaphysics or anatomy is not the main object of either. The poet's knowledge of human nature is the result of unconscious observation, an intuitive sagacity, or fine instinct—in one word *inspiration*. Tennyson's reviewer is delighted with the "metaphysical analysis" in Tennyson's poem, entitled "*Supposed confessions of a second-rate sensitive mind not in unity with itself*." A reader who wants poetry, and not metaphysics, would stop at the very title of such a production; and he would lose nothing by putting it aside. It is an inexcusable imposition upon the lover of pure poetry to slip such cold and deliberate speculations into a little volume of verse.

The *Westminster Reviewer*, in a tone more in unison with the utilitarian character of his periodical, than his admiration of versified metaphysics, maintains that "poetry forms no exception to the great law of progression that obtains in human affairs." The machinery of a poem, he says, is not less susceptible of improvement than the machinery of a cotton mill, and that there is no better reason why the one should retrograde from the days of Milton, than the other from those of Arkwright. This is a very unsound theory. No reader who knows what poetry is, can believe for a moment that it must necessarily advance with the advance of civilization, and with the certainty and precision of science. Excellence in poetry is dependent on individual and original power, not on the collected amount of human knowledge. Every man of science is indebted, more or less, to those who

* In the following lines (an entire poem!) Tennyson has evidently aimed at the style of Donne. The cold extravagance of the leading thought, and the placing the rhymes (*name* and *flame*, *alone* and *throne*) at such a distance from each other, that the ear cannot recognize them, are quite in the manner of the poets of the "metaphysical school."

To ———
 Sainted Juliet! dearest name!
 If to love be life alone,
 Divinest Juliet,
 I love thee, and live, and yet
 Love unreturned is like the fragrant flame
 Folding the slaughter of the sacrifice
 Offered to Gods upon an altar throne;
 My heart is lighted at thine eyes
 Changed into fire and blown about by sighs.

have preceded him, and yet a mere school-boy of the present day may surpass in accuracy and extent of scientific knowledge, the greatest philosophers of former ages. But the children of the nineteenth century will not so easily surpass a Shakespeare or a Milton. Nor has the power of constructing a fine poem so wondrously "progressed" since the dawn of literature, as to enable Wordsworth and Tennyson to throw Homer into the shade. The old blind poet, in spite of the vast lapse of time and "the march of intellect," is still the first of Epic poets.

We have already lived to see too many "impossibilities" effected, to laugh at any new scheme, however startling, that is seriously entertained by any man of scientific genius. It is enough to turn one's head to contemplate the possible "impossibilities" of the next century, and to make one burn with envy and indignation to think how many stupid fellows in 1950 will enjoy comforts and conveniences that the cleverest fellows of the present day are incapable of adumbrating in their dreams.

We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow ;
Our wiser sons no doubt will think us so.

—
So far they'll top our thoughts,
That we in *forgery* of shapes and tricks
Come short of what they'll do

If literature or the science of mind were to make the same marvellous advance as mechanical science, in a few cycles human nature would be as much changed as it is said the elements of the body are in every seven years. But dynamics and mechanics are very different things, and do not always travel together on the same road or with equal pace. The school-boy of 1850 has a familiar acquaintance with scientific truths that were unknown to Newton ; and the world even now is but a child in science to what it will be in another quarter of a century. But the poets have made no advance. Their equals and superiors existed two thousand years ago. It is the same with mental philosophy. It is just where it was in the days of Aristotle. It is melancholy to think that, with respect to the human mind, there is an insuperable bar to all further progress. The burden and the mystery of man's spiritual life must be endured "while this machine is to him." He makes no intellectual excursions or discoveries beyond the borders of this narrow world. He can steer his course over the waves in the wind's eye, without oars or sails—he can lay down a thousand leagues of railway to facilitate a familiar intercourse between distant cities—he can realize the lovers' and the merchants' wish in the annihilation of space and time—he can waft a sigh or a bank-

note from Indus to the Pole—he can move large brick-built edifices from one street to another—he can supply the tropics with the ice of Northern regions—he can bring down the lightning from heaven—and ere long he may send electrical messages from Kedgeree to Portsmouth, and from China to Peru. All these miracles of science have been effected already, or may yet be effected within this nineteenth century of time. But the MIND of man is stationary, perhaps even retrograde. What does the profoundest living philosopher really know of mental science that was unknown to Aristotle? Have we a living poet equal to Homer? We have infinitely more knowledge of the physical world than our ancestors had, but are we on that account one jot the wiser?

“ Knowledge and wisdom far from being one,
Have oft times no connection.”

Science, on the other hand, has latterly achieved marvels so perfectly astounding that at last the miracles of physics must cease to astonish us at all.

Even in the mechanical department of poetry—the mere metrical arrangement—there has been no manifest improvement. No dramatic verse of these days is equal to the dramatic verse of Shakespeare, and no heroic blank-verse is equal to that of Milton. The lyrics of the Elizabethan era have a music which has defied the anxious imitation of some of our best living poets.

Here is a specimen of Mr. Tennyson's metaphysical verses. Notwithstanding the wondrous march of intellect in the nineteenth century, we have seen infinitely better verses in the volumes of England's earliest poets.

Nothing will die ;
All things will change ;
Through eternity ;
'Tis the world's winter ;
Autumn and summer
Are gone long ago.
Earth is dry to the centre,
But spring a new comer—
A spring rich and strange,
Shall make the winds blow
Round and round
Through and through
Here and there
'Till the air
And the ground
Shall be filled with life anew.
The world was never made ;
It will change, but it will not fade ;
So let the wind range ;
For even and morn
Ever will be
Through eternity,
Nothing was born
Nothing will die ;
All things will change.

The old earth
Had a birth,
As all men know,
Long ago.
And the old earth must die.
So let the warm winds range
And the blue wave beat the shore ;
You will never see
Through eternity.
All things were born.
Ye will come never more
For all things must die.

This is the sort of poetry which, in its metaphysics and modulations, we are told, exhibits an illustration of "the great law of progression that obtains in human affairs," and makes us indifferent to the barbarian poets of the age of Elizabeth ! Tennyson, like Wordsworth, and the other poets of the time, fancies that the Muse is always at his command, and that *all* his thoughts, at *all* hours, breathe the breath of inspiration. He, accordingly, places the prose side of his nature before the world with as much self-satisfaction as the poetical. He can suppress nothing. It is this incontinence, and self-conceit, encouraged by the criticism of the day, which occasions so many others of our poets to disgust the public with the very lees or dross of the mind in the form of verse. They dare to print and publish for the eye of posterity a sort of trash that a school-boy would be ashamed to exhibit to his play-fellows ; and the critics either wink at the audacity or hail it with loud applause. A modest writer who does his best, and never offends against good sense and good taste, is treated with contumely ; but the most silly extravagance, the most careless slipslop—the most villainous nonsense in any volume with a high name attached to it, are received with honour. If an unknown writer were to publish such productions as the following, he would be pronounced below criticism—unworthy of either praise or censure. The first is an entire poem—so also, is the second :—

SONG.

Who can say
Why to-day,
To-morrow will be yesterday.
Who can tell
Why to smell
The violet, recalls the dewy prime
Of youth and buried time ?
The cause is nowhere found in rhyme.

O DARLING ROOM.

I.

O darling room, my heart's delight,
Dear room, the apple of my sight,

With thy two couches soft and white,
There is no room so exquisite,
No little room so warm and bright
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

II.

For I the Nonnenwerth have seen
And Oberwinter's vineyards green
Musical Lurlei ; and between
The hills to Bingen I have been
Bingen in Darnstadt, where the Rhene
Curves toward Mentz, a woody scene.

III.

Yet never did there meet my sight
In any town, to left or right,
A little room so exquisite.
With two such couches soft and white ;
Nor any room so warm and bright
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

It is lamentable, that such stuff as this should come from such a hand ; for Tennyson, with all his faults, is as true a poet as ever lived. But the false criticism of the day has encouraged the poets to indulge in an unfortunate contempt for all selection of thought and care in composition. Compression, and accuracy, and tasteful finish, and good sense, and natural feeling, are deemed indications of want of originality and genius. Cloudy metaphysics, far-fetched conceits, or vulgar truisms, disguised in a fantastic phraseology, seem to put all our critics into an ecstasy of admiration.

THE "HOW" AND THE "WHY."

?

I am any man's suitor,
If any will be my tutor :
Some say this life is pleasant,
Some think it speedeth fast ;
In time there is no present,
In eternity no future,
In eternity no past.

We laugh, we cry, we are born, we die,
Who will riddle me the *how* and the *why* ?
The bulrush nods unto its brother,
The wheatears whisper to each other :
What is it they say ? What do they there ?
Why two and two make four ? Why round is not square ?
Why the rock stands still, and the light clouds fly ?
Why the heavy oak groans, and the white willows sigh ?
Why deep is not high, and high is not deep ?
Whether we wake, or whether we sleep ?
Whether we sleep, or whether we die
How you are you ? Why I am I ?
Who will riddle me the *how* and the *why* ?
The world is somewhat ; it goes on somehow ;
But what is the meaning of *then* and *now* ?
I feel there is something ; but how and what ?
I know there is somewhat ; but what and why ?
I cannot tell if that somewhat be I.

The little bird pipeth—' why ? why ?'
 In the summer woods when the sun falls low ;
 And the great bird sits on the opposite bough,
 And stares in his face, and shouts, ' how ? how ?'
 And the black owl scuds down the mellow twilight,
 And chaunts, ' how ? how ? ' the whole of the night.

Why the life goes when the blood is spilt ?
 What the life is ? where the soul may lie ?
 Why a church is with a steeple built ;
 And a house with a chimney-pot ?
 Who will riddle me the how and the what ?
 Who will riddle me the what and the why ?

There never was a writer with a mind or an ear who could turn his faculties to a worse account than this. Such a production is, really, beneath criticism.* A critic would be almost as blameworthy as the writer, and would pay a wretched compliment to the reader, if he were formally to particularize its defects.

Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spencer, and Milton, stand at the head of the first order of British poets, and Dryden and Pope at the head of the second. This is now pretty generally acknowledged. There are poets who may be said to be in a class below the second, who may yet possess a larger share of imagination and sensibility of the most essentially poetical kind than was possessed by Dryden or Pope, and which fine qualities were possessed in the highest degree only by the four great poets in the first class. Collins and Keats, for example, had more imagination and feeling than either Dryden or Pope, but upon the whole, Collins and Keats occupy a far less lofty and prominent position in English literature. They were not such industrious and perfect artists. They promised more than they performed. They rather indicated the possession of rare faculties than turned those faculties to a full account. Dryden and Pope produced well-conceived and carefully and skilfully completed works ; works that the world will not willingly let die. They had great general powers—great acuteness, great worldly wis-

* "I have not," said Coleridge, "read through all Mr. Tennyson's poems, which have been sent to me : but I think there are some things of a good deal of beauty in what I have seen. The misfortune is that he has begun to write verses without very well understanding what metre is. Even if you write in known and approved metre, the odds are, if you are not a metrist yourself, that you will not write harmonious verses : but to deal in new metres without considering what metre means and requires, is preposterous. What I would, with many wishes for success, prescribe to Tennyson,—indeed without which he can never be a poet in act,—is to write for the next two or three years in none but well-known and strictly defined metres, such as the heroic couplet, the octave stanza or the octo-syllabic measure of the Allegro and Penseroso. He would, probably, thus get embued with a sensation, if not a sense, of metre, without knowing it, just as Eton boys get to write such good Latin verses by conning Ovid and Tibullus. As it is, I can scarcely scan his verses."—*Table Talk of S. T. Coleridge*.

dom, admirable good sense, and above all, indefatigable industry—in addition to their poetical endowments. Within the last hundred years there have been many British poets of a genius quite as true and rare as that of Dryden or Pope, but their minds were less happily balanced, and many of them led a life of comparative idleness and *ran to seed*. They did not so well economize their powers, and those powers though finer were less versatile and less vigorous. The world does not estimate poets and painters by their innate capacity, but by their actual productions. Imagination and sensibility, though the chief, are not the only qualities which form a great artist.

There can hardly be a doubt that Alfred Tennyson has more of the subtler kind of poetry in his nature, than Alexander Pope had. But it is equally certain that Pope is the greater poet of the two, and will always hold a higher station in the literature of this country, unless Tennyson does a great deal more before he dies than he has done yet. We doubt much if any of his works will last so long as even those of Oliver Goldsmith. There are many young poets in these days who have given out gleams of a far higher order of poetical imagination than is exhibited in the *Deserted Village* and the *Traveller*, for there is little ideality in these poems, though a great deal of simple truth and tenderness. But they are still cherished favourites, and most deservedly so, and will perhaps outlive all the poetry of the present day. They are not only effusions of genuine though not lofty inspiration, but studiously yet happily elaborated works of art. Goldsmith and Pope always wrote under a deep sense of their responsibility. They laboured hard to satisfy the public taste and to secure the perpetuity of their own fame. They never trusted wholly to inspiration. They had not the presumption of the poets of these times, who think that they are always and equally inspired, and that inspiration is all in all. But poets are *not* the same at all hours any more than other men. They ought to give to the public their *best* hours, and no portion of their *worst*. The miserable self-delusion which leads the poets of our time to imagine that every drop of their nature is immortal, has deluged our literature with offensive trash from minds capable of nobler things. Campbell and Byron had more discretion and self-knowledge and a greater respect for the public. But Coleridge, and Shelley, and Wordsworth, and Tennyson, especially the last two, have always seemed to imply that they were equally poetical at all hours, and that their most careless effusions were all "*Sibylline Leaves*." The critics have favored this delusion by the most extravagant and indiscri-

minate idolatry. But the very editors who work themselves into an ecstasy of admiration at the sight of every acknowledged fragment of a Wordsworth or a Tennyson, would most assuredly have rejected more than one-half of what these poets have written, had the poems been sent to them anonymously as contributions to their magazines or papers. Too many of our would-be critics are utterly incapable of an independent judgment, and

To the fascination of a name
Surrender judgment hood-winked.

Such poets as Pope and Goldsmith always do *their very best*, and expunge more than they preserve. By the erasion of errors and the reduction of exuberances, they condense their performances into point and vigor, and render them almost invulnerable to criticism and fit to live. Ten years elapsed between the first brief sketch of Goldsmith's *Traveler* and its publication, during which it was nearly re-written two or three times. "The sense of my faults," said Pope, "first made me correct; besides that it was as pleasant to me to correct as to write." If these poets had trusted to their inspiration alone and had scorned the labour of revision and shrunk from the *pain of reduction*, we should not at this day have been so familiar with their names. It was the custom of Virgil "to pour out his verses in the morning and pass the day in retrenching exuberances and correcting inaccuracies." The poets of these times disdain this toil, and never feel a moment's self-mistrust. The most poetical spirits have prosaic hours; but this is a truth of which the present race of bards seem perfectly unconscious. We worship such a marvellous genius as Shakespeare in spite of his defects. But though so often open to critical objection on small points, he was not always a careless writer. He re-wrote his *Hamlet*. His *Othello* is a work of almost perfect art, evidently the result of the most careful study as well as of the most noble inspiration. The blaze of mighty genius sometimes spreads a dazzling veil upon its errors, and gives them even a spurious charm. But it is not safe for poets in the lower ranks of genius to trust wholly to their inspiration and imagine that like charity it will always cover a multitude of sins. Some of the poets of recent times have a genuine vitality in them, but they are not exactly giants. They do not take their places by the side of Shakespeare and Milton. They should therefore make up by care and labour for what they want in original power. The populace is easily pleased, but the public is a fastidious judge.

It has been said that "perhaps no man ever lived who possessed the true *afflatus* in a greater degree than Shelley." We think both Milton and Shakespeare were still more highly

endowed with the same quality. It is true that those great poets, especially the latter, were not so wholly out of the world of plain truth and common sense. Shelley never alighted upon the solid earth. His poetry is a dream of dazzling splendour and magnificent confusion. It has no sober wisdom, no simple pathos, no natural pictures. It wants keeping and repose. It is like the work of a grand intellect disordered. It is a mistake to suppose that Shelley is more poetical than Shakespeare or even Burns, merely because he is always transcendental ; or that the highest and truest poetical imagination is in its nature necessarily dazzling, startling, or unearthly. The noblest poetry is the simplest, and a more truly poetical imagination is sometimes exhibited in a quiet touch of nature in the songs of the Scottish Ploughman than in some of those lines of Shelley in which he has "dipped his pencil in the hues of earthquake and eclipse." Shelley's genius only shines brightly on things already bright ; it is only great in handling grand things ; but the finest sort of poetry is that which like the sun illuminates all around and disdains not to shed its beautifying light on the lowliest objects. It makes vulgar things divine. Shelley had nothing of this universality. But because he was always in the clouds, and never tried what genius can do with things of earth, unreflecting critics imagine that he was more purely poetical than his less ambitious brethren. It is far easier to deal poetically with dreams and visions than to seize the poetry of our daily life. This has been done by Shakespeare and Burns. These great poets light up with sun-like lustre the very weeds of the world ; they put a window into the breast of humanity and let us see the movements of the interior ; they

Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

They make us wiser and better men. But no reader is made wiser or better by the perusal of Shelley's poems. He only dazzles and perplexes us. In the perusal of his extraordinary pages we are lost in dreams within dreams, and behold by glimmering and uncertain lights, but the shadows of shadows. It is in this sort of glorious chaos that Shelley excels, and in scarcely any thing else. If a real madman could make use of the accomplishment of verse to record his wild imaginations, he might often surpass Shelley in the mystical and irregular grandeur of his effusions.

Great wits to madness nearly are allied,

said old John Dryden, and Macaulay seems to suppose that some share of insanity is a necessary constituent of genius. We do not think so. On the contrary, we maintain that in the wildest flights of Shakespeare there is more soundness of

intellect, more true logic, than in the gravest disquisitions of Jeremy Bentham or even John Locke. All poetry seems the nonsense of a madman to intellects of a certain order : to the generality of mathematicians, and political economists, and hard, worldly men. To *their* perceptions the finest poetry is rubbish. Even Newton thought the best poetry only "ingenious nonsense." It is not the fault but the misfortune of hard or cold natures that nothing has an existence for them but *matter of fact*. And yet if one of these practical men of sense condescends to write verse himself, it is indeed not a matter of fact, but a *matter of falsehood*. It is a ludicrous exhibition of false feeling, false images, false views of human nature. They betray an utter ignorance of those profound truths which are the materials of genuine poetry. No wonder, then, that poetry is despicable in their eyes. They understand not what they condemn and hate. They see the truth of a sum in arithmetic or a tabular statement, but they feel not the truth of a line which lights up human nature or stirs the hearts of more sensitive beings to the lowest depths.

Shelley was not a great artist. Few things came from his hands in a complete state. His productions, generally speaking, are not so much poems as rich *materials* for poems. They are abrupt, fragmentary and obscure. But the great triumph of the true poet is to build the lofty rhyme into a complete structure, to render profound thoughts intelligible to the multitude, to popularize philosophy, to instruct by enchantment, to make us see more of the spiritual world than is visible to the unaided optics of the vulgar, and to beguile insensibly even unreflecting readers into the contemplation of human nature in all its phases. But these things Shelley never accomplished ; perhaps he never aimed at so grand a result of intellectual labour. Not that he was deficient in good will to man. On the contrary, he was a true philanthropist ; of a most loving, noble, disinterested nature. In domestic life he had the tenderness of a woman, associated with the finest moral characteristics of the sterner sex. But as an intellectual being, he was a theorist and a dreamer, and no more fitted for the realities of life than Hamlet the Dane. It is astonishing how little there is of mere human interest in the great mass of his poetical conceptions. He did not study man. As a poet he had no sympathy for things as they are. With him "function" was often "smothered in surmise ; and nothing was but what was not." He loved man, but he did not study his mortal nature ; he loved and admired the external world, but all living things and all material objects, his ever active imagination converted into splendid

but barren idealities. They suggested nothing but vague images and dazzling dreams. It is difficult to believe that he ever thought it desirable to simplify and substantiate his wild visions, or to make use of lucid language. If he really aimed at such clearness and precision, his failure was indeed remarkable. Unhappily, his example has infected the whole fry of smaller poets, and corrupted the taste of some writers of the time who have a genius for better things. Tennyson would have been twice the poet that he is if he had never read a page of Shelley and taken it into his head that mystical metaphysics and vague dreams are the poet's best materials. How differently would he have written had he written at all in the days of Pope or Goldsmith !

It would delight all men of true taste, all the honest and enlightened lovers of English literature, if the critics of the day would change their tone, assume an independence of judgment, expose and discourage the faults of great writers and reserve all their admiration for real excellence. We might then expect from the Muse of Alfred Tennyson instead of such poems as "*O darling Room*" and "*The How and the Why*" a whole volume of verses as exquisite as the following :—

MARIANA.

"Mariana in the moated grange."

Measure for Measure.

With blackest moss the flower-pots
Were thickly crusted, one and all,
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the peach to the garden wall,
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange,
Unlifted was the clinking latch,
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch,
Upon the lonely "oated grange."
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary ;
I would that I were dead !"

Her tears fell with the dews at even,
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried,
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide,
After the flitting of the bats,
When, thickest dark did 'trance the sky
She drew her casement curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats,
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, "I am a-weary, a-weary ;
I would that I were dead !"

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow,
The cock sung out an hour ere light ;
From the dark fen the oxen's low

Came to her ; without hope of change,
 In sleep she seemed to walk forlorn,
 Till cold winds woke the gay-eyed morn
 About the lonely moated grange.
 She only said, 'The day is dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said ;
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead !'

About a stonecast from the wall,
 A sluice, where blacken'd waters slept,
 And o'er it many, round and small,
 The clustered marishmosses crept.
 Hard by a poplar shook alway,
 All silver green with gnarled bark,
 For leagues no other tree did dark
 The level waste, the rounding gray.
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said ;
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead !'

And ever when the moon was low,
 And the shrill winds were up an' away,
 In the white curtain, to and fro,
 She saw the gusty shadow sway.
 But when the moon was very low,
 And wild winds bound within their cell,
 The shadow of the poplar fell
 Upon her bed, across her brow.
 She only said, 'The night is dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said ;
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead !'

All day within the dreamy house,
 The doors upon their hinges creak'd,
 The blue fly sang i' the pane ; the mouse
 Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
 Or from the crevice peer'd about.
 Old faces glimmer'd through the doors,
 Old footsteps trod the upper floors
 Old voices call'd her from without.
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said ;
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead !'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
 The slow clock ticking, and the sound
 Which to the wooing wind sloof
 The poplar made, did now confound
 Her sense ; but most she loath'd the hour
 When the thick moated sunbeam lay
 Athwart the chambers, and the day
 Down-sloped was westering in his bower.
 Then, said she, 'I am very dreary,
 He will not come,' she said ;
 She wept, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 Oh God, that I were dead !'

It would be difficult to return to the cold severities of criticism with such music as this in the mind's ear. If Tennyson had always written thus, in a manner so worthy of his genius, it would have been "vain to blame and useless to praise him."

THE SEPARATION.

I.

I NE'ER shall know one moment's mirth
 When thou art from my side,
 I then shall view the cheerless earth
 As one dark desert wide.
 My soul may feel full many a care
 Though none should sadden thee,
 But save what thy dear breast may share
 No joy can smile for me !

II.

Ah, sweet one, e'en when thou wert nigh
 And fate had less of fear,
 Thy radiant features in mine eye,
 Thy light laugh in mine ear.
 'Tis strange how fitfully a crowd
 Of thoughts have crossed my brain,
 That made thy fairy form a cloud,
 Thy voice a sound of pain.

III.

The dreary darkness of despair
 Like storms in winter's sky,
 Then fell on every prospect fair,
 I knew not whence or why ;—
 If thus the dire depression came
 Before thy gleaming brow,
 Alas ! what agonies will tame
 My wayward bosom now !

IV.

Amid the gay deceitful throng,
 Whose smiles insult the sad,
 I soon shall know each bitter wrong
 That makes the spirit mad ;
 For all that grief would fain reveal
 The selfish crowd disown,—
 Oh ! 'tis a fearful thing to feel
 In this cold world alone !

V.

And yet this dark and dreary state
 Henceforward must be mine ;
 To mix with those I scorn and hate,
 And prize no love but thine ;
 To dream that thou while distant far
 May'st smile on fashion's train,
 Who'll watch thee as men watch the star
 That lights them o'er the main.

VI.

Though reason bids me trust thy truth,
 At times rebellious fears
 Will tremble for thy guileless youth
 Besieged by sighs and tears ;
 And even though thy gentle heart
 Be faithful and the same,
 It makes my jealous bosom smart
 When *others* breathe thy name.

VII.

The vows so fondly interchanged
 Each happy hour we met,
 Thy soul indeed must be estranged
 Ere thou canst all forget ;—
 But yet if we may meet again
 No mortal voice can tell,—
 And, Oh ! with what bewildering pain
 I bid thee now, *farewell* !

SONNET—THE PARTING.

SHE sees her lover yet !—From yon high tower,
 (Her bright locks floating on the morning wind
 Like clouds beneath the sun,) with wildered mind
 And heart that flutters like a breeze-stirred flower,
 She takes her farewell look. Oh, till this hour
 She knew not how she loved ! Her soul was blind
 To half her hero's worth, and now can find
 Nor words nor signs to wreak her passion's power.
 The last embrace is o'er. Where yet she stands
 The lovers met and parted. Near her feet
 His empty sheath was thrown—a token meet
 Of valour's purpose stern. She waives her hands,
 And still her strain'd eyes answering signal greet
 Where o'er the far hills wind the warrior bands.

STANZAS.

[WRITTEN IN A LADY'S ALBUM.]

I.

You know not, gentle Lady, what you ask,
 Nor what I have to give, or you would never
 Have set me this unprofitable task,
 Or thought me (strange delusion !) half so clever :—
 I blush, and almost on distraction border,
 At calls like thine for verses “made to order.”

II

And yet 'tis strange that scarce a week elapses
 But lo ! some album bright, (with feminine letter,)
 Alarms my timid Muse. Each claim perhaps is
 A compliment, and yet 'twould suit me better,
 To waive it, and exchange the painful pleasure
 For ease unbroken and unanxious leisure.

III.

'Tis not so much that I dislike the trouble,
 For really, if your subject bard may say so,
 I'd toil until I grew both faint and double
 To serve the fairer sex, could I but lay so
 Flattering an unction to my weary spirit
 As the proud consciousness of genuine merit.

IV.

But as I positively want the power
 Even to please myself, and hate to prove it,
 I pass what seems a very ill-spent hour
 When my tried temper fails and fair ones move it
 To something like a state of mad vexation,
 By urging me to such severe probation.

V.

I find that several persons have a notion
 That I can write, as ancient maidens chatter,
 As easily as chemists mix a lotion,
 Or lawyers make a bill, or scolds a clatter :
 And if I humbly hint my incapacity,
 They question both my will and my veracity.

VI.

It is not till with suicidal kindness
 I grant their wishes (to my shame and sorrow),
 And prove beyond a doubt their partial blindness
 By rhymes the meanest plagiarist would not borrow
 To save his soul, that gentle maids and matrons
 Desert my ranks of literary patrons.

VII.

Though at the risk of changing the opinion
 Implied in your request, these hurried stanzas
 Shall stand as proof of feminine dominion,
 That from Don Quixotes down to Sancha Panzas,
 So sways our sex that touched with sweet insanity
 We play the fool with infinite urbanity.

VIII.

Who can refuse the fair ? Oh ! I for one
 Feel it impossible ; you now must know it,
 To your cost and to mine. The deed is done—
 The page is blotted,—yet I pray you show it
 To all who own an Album—all who ever
 Have thought your rhyming friend unkind or clever.

SONNET—A STORM.

[WRITTEN IN INDIA.]

THE strife is hushed,—yet lingering shadows lower
 Around the rising sun ! The distant hill
 Lies hid in mist,—the tempest-swollen rill
 O'erflows the vale,—this antique, hoary tower
 Austerely frowns above the stricken bower,
 Where droops the wet-winged minah, cold and still.
 Yon prostrate tree the gazer's breast doth fill
 With thoughts of death's inevitable hour.
 The mighty spirit of the midnight storm
 Passed were for ages rose the green-wood's pride,
 And what availed its glory ? Its vast form,
 Stretched on the groaning earth, but serves to hide
 The serpent's dwelling ; and decay's dull worm
 Soon in its mouldering bosom shall abide !

ON GOING HOME.

[WRITTEN IN INDIA, JANUARY, 1835.]

THE Hooghly is now covered with the stately ships of England. It is the season for *going home* ! They whom fortune has blessed, and whose term of exile is expired, are anticipating the joy of once more greeting the faces of early friends, and the green hills and valleys on which the morning of existence shed its cheerful light. They are preparing for an eventful but happy change. They are entering upon a fresh chapter of the book of life. Oh ! with what yearning hearts do we turn to those yet unread pages to which the finger of Hope directs us ! I hear around me many voices that speak of home and happiness. I shall soon cease to hear them—perhaps for ever ! They will pass, like the wind, into happier regions, and breathe in other ears their old familiar music. The fate of these emancipated exiles awakens no ungenerous feeling in my heart, and yet it aches with sorrow when I listen to their home-anticipations. *They* are intoxicated with delight, while *I* sicken with despair. They are like boys at school when their long-looked-for holidays have arrived. But he who still lingers on this distant shore, is like an unhappy child who remains in the same dreary and detested place, when his more fortunate playmates have departed homewards.

But amidst all the pleasurable excitements that stir the heart of the exile when about to revisit his native land, there are moments of occasional thoughtfulness and sadness and apprehension which render his fate far less enviable than that of the home-returning school-boy. The spirit of the latter is bright and buoyant. His hopes are unclouded, his pleasure is unalloyed. The former, on the other hand, has seen too much of human life to trust entirely to its enchantments. He is afraid of his own happiness. He can scarcely believe it real or well founded. It is too like a dream. There is something strange and ominous in the unaccustomed elation of his heart, and he varies and mingles his emotions like a child that laughs and cries in the same breath. These mixed feelings are sometimes succeeded by an unqualified mistrust and forlorn forebodings. He reverts to the innumerable disappointments that have already darkened his path and arrives at a reluctant conviction that it is weak and unreasonable to imagine that the course of life can alter. As in the natural world the frequent interchange of sunshine and of shadow forbids us to anticipate the long duration of

pleasant weather, so his past experience of human life leads him to regard all prospects of true and lasting happiness as idle dreams. He has reached too many of those once distant scenes, so gorgeously clad in colors of the air, to trust again to the soft illusions which fade at our approach. He has learnt that the many-tinted bow of heaven is nothing but the junction of light and vapour, and that the scenes that charm us afar off

To those who journey near,
Barren, brown, and rough appear !

In this mistrustful mood of mind a thousand melancholy images rise up before him. Instead of the bright countenances of the living he sees the shrouded faces of the dead. The forms that cheered his childhood and smiled upon his later dreams are enveloped in the shadows of the grave. His early home is empty—the hearth of his infancy is cold ! The sweet flower-garden, in which he once toiled with eager pleasure beneath the summer sun, is now a dreary wilderness. Or if the halls and lands of his fathers are not lonely and neglected, they are, perhaps, in the possession of the stranger, and his own birth-place is like a scene in a foreign land. He recalls the beautiful Arabic exclamation—"I came to the place of my youth and cried, my friends, where are they ? and Echo answered, *where are they ?*" Even Nature herself seems changed. The once familiar hills and valleys have a strange look, like the face of an altered friend. He has heard, but too often, of such miserable mutations and disappointments, and he trembles as he reflects that his own fancy may prove prophetic. Besides all these gloomy fears and meditations, there are other drawbacks to that felicity which the home-seeking exile might enjoy if he were more sanguine and less reflective. He has, perhaps, formed many friendships with his fellow-countrymen in India, and it is impossible to break social ties, however slight, without some degree of sadness and regret. In the case of long-tryed and faithful friendships, the parting hour—especially when the separation is probably an eternal one—is a dreadful trial. In the latter case it is like the farewell we take of the dying. Our last affectionate look at a familiar face is accompanied with a feeling that it is impossible to describe. The lowest depths of the human heart are stirred, and that convulsive movement with which we tear ourselves away for ever from the dear associates of many years, seem to wrench some palpable and necessary support, and leave us bare and lacerated. Even the very spots that we have long wished to quit are hallowed when the time of parting is arrived. Like old

acquaintances who had once but little of our love, or perhaps even something of our hatred, they present at such a moment a softer aspect, and we almost wonder that we should ever have regarded them with coldness or dislike. They have become a portion of our associations, and these, of whatever nature they may be, can hardly pass through the mists of memory without receiving that tender and dream-like hue which makes the past so precious. The coldest and coarsest mind is touched and elevated on such occasions. The finest points of our common nature are then developed ; and never is the human countenance so informed with beauty, with intellect and with sensibility, as in parting for ever from old friends and familiar scenes. At such a time every one is a poet, and looks upon human life and external nature with a deep and solemn feeling. They who are apt in ordinary seasons to take a literal and vulgar view of all things, assume a higher tone, and see something to feel, to admire, and to cherish beyond the range of their daily thoughts and avocations.

But let us pass over the trial of separation, and trace the after-progress of the friends who leave us. The hurry and excitement of embarkation, and the novelty of their position, are circumstances well calculated to shorten the pain of parting, and give a fresh impulse to the mind. When they are once fairly launched on the wide blue ocean, the relief from all common cares and duties—the holiday feeling—the exultation of spirit occasioned by a change of air and scene—all dispose them to give a ready welcome to cheerful thoughts, and to banish every unpleasant recollection. Then grave men become as frolicsome as children, and take a deep interest in those trifles and amusements which during their long weary exile and amidst far higher cares were either forgotten or despised. They seem as if they had taken a new lease of life. The fountain of early pleasure is unlocked. Their first fresh feelings return upon their hearts, and they become as frank and social, and as sanguine and as willing to be pleased, as in the generous ardour of their boyhood. Each new occurrence in their progress—a change of wind or weather—the capture of a fish or bird—the discovery of a ship, like a speck of cloud on the far horizon—a dinner or a dance with the strangers, when the two little oaken worlds in the vast space of waters, arrive in contact—the touching at some small uninhabited island, as solitary and romantic as the residence of Robinson Crusoe—and finally the first pale glimmering of the snow-white cliffs of Albion, make their hearts bound within them, and they feel as they have often thought that they should never feel again !

“ A MISERABLE SCENE.”

THE silver clash of fountains,
 In shady valleys heard—
 The sheep-bell on the mountains—
 The song of matin bird—
 The glassy feet of Ocean
 In the white cliff's pebbled cave—
 The fluttering sweet commotion
 When winds the green wood wave—
 The sound of rushing rivers—
 The murmur of small rills,
 Soft as the voice that quivers
 When tears the glad eye fills—
 Loud trumpets from high towers—
 And lutes on sleeping lakes—
 Love's whisper in close bowers—
 Joy's laugh in sunny brakes—
 A proud young mother singing
 To please her playful child—
 Shrill shouts o'er green hills ringing
 Of boys with rapture wild,—
 O, musical contradictions
 Of Discontent and Spleen,
 Of the Bigot's gloomy fictions
 Of “ *a miserable scene !* ”

SONNET—RESIGNATION.

Oh ! come not, Passion, with the fiends of care,
 And forms that haunt the midnight of the soul !
 Raise not the fearful tempest of despair
 Along my darken'd path ! Let Faith control
 Rebellious thoughts and pangs that fiercely tear
 The chords of life. There is a softer grief
 The lone and weary heart may learn to bear,
 Calm and resign'd, till quick tears yield relief
 To voiceless feelings, and the bosom teems
 With holy consolations. Such may be
 Toss'd on the dark waves of life's stormy sea,
 The good man's sorrow. Soon hope's cheerful beams
 The trusting spirit from the strife shall free,
 And gild the shadows of the mourner's dreams !

LINES,

SUGGESTED BY A SCENE NEAR CALCUTTA.

No hills that rear their grey heads to the sky,
 Smooth slopes or dells abrupt, or valleys long,
 Diversify the scene. Yet the charmed eye
 Drinks deep delight, and Fancy's airy throng
 (Sweet kindred images !) or glide along
 The level land, or through blue ether fly,
 Or haunt the twilight grove.

How dark and round,
 So sharply out-lined on the bright green ground,
 The shadows of yon broad-branched Banians lie,
 Fixed, as for ever !

Casaurinas high—
 Slim giants—ghostly—what a mystic sound,
 Sea-like, remote, and wild—a moan profound—
 Ye breathe in upper air ! Can the soft sigh
 Of Zephyr wake, as with some tale of wrong,
 From frames like yours such sad responsive song ?

Through the crisp leaves, all tremulous and bright,
 Of this vast Peepul, when the freshening air
 Opens its rustling depths, what glimpses fair
 Of silvery cloudlets and cerulean light !

Ye princely Palms, with proudly waving plumes,
 Nature's aristocrats, 'tis your domain !
 Where'er ye rise the rich bright scene assumes
 The proper grandeur of the Orient plain.

'Tis not my father land ; yet why despair ?
 Why brood on exile ? The whole world's a *home*
 For every human heart. Is bliss a flower
 That will not blossom but in one sweet bower ?
 If rightly sought, the treasure is not rare,
 " 'Tis *no-where* to be found, or *every-where*."
 And beauty too is seen on every shore,
 In every sky. Is not this verdant floor
 A carpet for a king ? This wide blue dome
 Fit canopy for the proudest potentate
 Enthroned in gilded hall ?

;

What mortal state
Is comparable with his who *feels* the boon
Of bare existence, opening heart, eye, ear
To human sympathies and sights sublime,
And every joyous sound or solemn tune
That Nature breathes ; whatever be the clime ?

Some know not what a privilege 'tis to live
On this green earth, 'till called on to re-give
To the Great Giver all that life can share ;
'Till the last summons biddeth them prepare
To meet the change that turneth flesh to clay—
To take their last leave of the smiling day,
Its balmy airs, its loveliness, and light,
For death's close dungeon and its starless night.*

SONNET, WRITTEN IN INDIA.

NIGHT AND MORNING.

THE moon was shrouded ; cold, continuous rain
Dripped on the grove with melancholy sound ;
The jackal's distant cry, the voice profound
Of Gunga's rolling wave, like moans of pain,
Came on the midnight blast ! Hill, vale and plain,
Lay in impenetrable gloom o'ercast,
Save when the fitful meteor glimmered past,
Or the blue lightning lit the drear domain !—
Lo ! what a glorious change ! The rising sun
Spreads wide his living light ! The fragrant bower
Ringing with morning hymns—the stately tower—
The Shepherd's simple shed, alike have won
The cheerful smile of heaven. Fair Nature's dower
Of beauty is restored, and Care's brief reign is done !

* The Casaurina, the tree alluded to in the above lines, is not indigenous. The first introduced here, as I have been informed, is the one close to the house of the Superintendent of the East India Company's Botanical Gardens. It is a native of Arracan, the east Coast of the Bay, and all the islands of the Straits of Malacca, where it grows to a great size. It is now, however, very common in Bengal, and, besides doing duty as a permanent mourner at our burying grounds, is occasionally seen in formal rows along the walls of private gardens, though it would look much better in clumps or as a single tree.

RULES FOR COMPOSITION FOR THE GUIDANCE OF YOUNG STUDENTS.

THE practice of composition compels a man to take some account of his mental wealth, and to arrange his ideas in something like a logical order. Until he has done this, he is like a careless merchant who takes no account of his stock, leaving his unopened bales huddled confusedly together in the 'darkness visible' of a dingy warehouse. A trader of this character must necessarily possess but a very vague notion of the actual amount and value of his goods, and if he suddenly require a particular article from the mass, he cannot place his hand upon it.

In learning to *write* clearly, we are learning to *think* clearly. A man unaccustomed to composition is apt to flatter himself that he can think quite as logically and as distinctly as other people whom he acknowledges to be better able to express their thoughts. He fancies that he does not want thoughts but words. This is often a mistake. Perhaps when called upon to write, such a person will scratch his head, bite his pen, and both look and feel confused. While he imagines that his only difficulty is a want of *words*, he is in reality very much in the same position as the dull fellow in one of Dryden's poems,* who was obliged to "whistle for want of *thought*."

When a writer's thoughts are clear and plentiful, the words seem to come of themselves. It can hardly be otherwise. For a thought well defined in the mind is endowed with words before they pass from the tongue to the ear or from the pen to the paper.

Let not the student of composition take pen in hand until he has well studied his subject; till he has cast it over in his mind; till he has shaped and arranged his thoughts; and till he knows exactly what it is that he is going to say. He must fix on his subject and hunt for its illustrations *before* he has seated himself at his desk—not *after*. He should not perplex himself at the same moment with the double task of finding both ideas and words. In the ardour of composition, many thoughts and illustrations may arise in his mind spontaneously and happily, without any search or trouble. He will have nothing to do but to set them down as they occur.

Let him put down his first thoughts in his first words. The words which occur at once—the words in which the thought is born—are generally the fittest, but when it is found to be otherwise, they can be changed at the time devoted

* Cymon and Iphigenia.

to revision and improvement. Wordsworth used to say that some of his own first expressions were "detestable." He had plenty of after-leisure in which to change them for better ones. The public could wait.

Never chill the ardour of composition by hunting long and anxiously for particular expressions.

When conscious that you have exhausted your stock of ideas, proceed to the process of revision. Go through the whole composition and strike out all needless repetitions of thought, and see that the thoughts are in their right places, so that the beginning, the middle, and the end be not jumbled confusedly together, as they frequently are in conversation, where a logical connection of arguments or a formal arrangement of ideas is less required.

The verb is the pivot of the sentence. Look carefully to that. No man of any education at all, in these days, will write *they is* ; that is to say, would put the two words together ; but in a long and involved sentence even practised writers sometimes will pass over a gross incongruity of this kind, when a number of words intervene between the verb and its nominative.

As a general rule, commence your practice of composition with short sentences, or sentences of moderate length, in preference to longer and more complicated ones. The first are more manageable. You may venture upon elaborate sentences when you have acquired confidence and facility. A well-grounded confidence and a happy facility can only be acquired by careful and long-continued study.

Indulge not in a silly boast of the ease with which you can write. Such "facility" is too often a "fatal" one. Our best writers have arrived at excellence by care and labour. The facility that *precedes* long study is almost invariably attended with inelegance, inaccuracy, and a want of pith and compression ; and these defects and faults can rarely afterwards be remedied or avoided. A bad habit of writing soon becomes a fixed one. The facility that *follows* study may be associated with the highest excellence : it is the second nature produced by art and habit.

After you have retrenched all the redundances of thought in the whole composition, go over every sentence separately and strike out every unnecessary word. Eagerly reject every phrase or epithet or branch of a sentence that can be spared without a deduction from the meaning. This process is sure to strengthen and improve the sentence.

Read assiduously *all* our best writers, that you may improve your taste, avoid impurities and vulgarisms, and enrich your memory with a vocabulary of the finest ex-

pressions in the language. But *make no one writer exclusively your model*. Do not "give your days and nights to the volumes of Addison" exclusively. Study Addison carefully, but study many other good writers also. If you have any intellectual character of your own or any peculiarity of feeling, you will form your own proper style unconsciously.

A servile imitation of any other person's style, however good the model or exact the copy, never raises a writer, let his talent be what it may, to a very enviable distinction.

Never trust exclusively to the criticisms of others on your productions. Be your own critic. Be not too easily satisfied with your own compositions. It is a dangerous weakness. Earnestly and sedulously endeavour to discover your own errors and defects and exultingly regard each new discovery of them as a proof that your judgment is advancing. If you are an author, you will soon learn that it is better that you should make such discoveries yourself before your books go to press, than that you should leave them to be made by the public.

One of the greatest charms of style is that perfect transparency of meaning, which saves the reader all trouble and protects the writer from all chance of being misunderstood. Ambiguity and obscurity are amongst the most offensive and injurious faults.

Do not be satisfied because you know your own meaning ; make it *impossible* that others should fail to know it as well as you do. Carefully consider whether any word or phrase or sentence could possibly seem to bear to another mind a different meaning from the one intended.

Select not the grandest words but the most suitable and expressive. Aim at simplicity. Do not be ambitious of ornament. Simplicity is itself a beauty, and is always within the reach of good sense and honest care. If you possess imagination and sensibility, your style will be sure to be animated and colored by your genius, without the aid of any direct artifice of composition, just as the soul unconsciously gives a character to the features ; and if you possess not these high endowments, you will only render yourself ridiculous in the vain endeavour to deceive the reader by clothing poor thoughts in regal purple.* Such an attempt to disguise one's poverty always ends in bombast and absurdity.

* A vile conceit in pompous words exprest
Is like a clown in regal purple drest.

Pope.

Do not imagine that what is easy to the writer must always be easy to the reader. Easy writing is often hard reading. That which reads easiest has been generally most labored.* The writer, however, must have the art to hide his art.

Do not be anxious to write a *long* essay, nor exultantly count the pages as you cover them with your penmanship. In these cases the hand is sometimes more active than the head. Be more anxious about the *quality* than the *quantity*. The composition of one page of accurate and elegant writing will do you more good and more credit than fifty pages of verbosity and bad grammar.

Let not your first failures discourage you. Though a too ready self-satisfaction is indeed a fatal error, perhaps faint-heartedness is almost as bad. They are both serious obstacles to the attainment of excellence in art. Hazlitt shed tears of shame and vexation over his first attempts to express his thoughts and feelings in writing. He had facility enough afterwards. With whatever talent a man may be born, he soon discovers that the art of composition is not an instinct. Every great writer—every man who has written for posterity—has had to *learn how to write*, and has only arrived at facility and correctness after long care and labour.

SONNET—YOUTH.

On ! there are green spots on the path of time,
The morning traveller, passing gaily by,
Views with irreverent and careless eye—
Till, with reverted gaze, when doomed to climb
With ceaseless toil adversity's rough steep,
He marks them in the shadowy distance lie
Like radiant clouds, that o'er an April sky,
'Mid gloom and strife, in silent beauty sleep.
Scenes of departed joy,—now mourned in vain !
To which my weary feet can ne'er return,
Farewell !—farewell !—Alas ! how soon we learn,
Urged o'er Life's later paths of care and pain,
Where hang the shadows of the tempest stern,
That all is drear beyond Youth's flowery plain.

* When I was looking on Pope's foul copy of the *Iliad*, and observing how very much it was corrected and interlined, he said, " I believe you would find upon examination, that those parts which have been most corrected read the easiest."—*Spence's Anecdotes*.

LINES TO THE MEMORY OF DAVID HARE.*

TO BE RECITED BY A HINDU.

O'ER the vast waste of waters—from a land
Small but renowned—a proud undaunted band,
Stirred with the thirst of conquest and of gold,
Came—traded—triumphed ! History never told
Of monarch-merchants—heroes wandering far—
A stranger tale of traffic or of war.

But can the busy mart, the battle field,
The dearest wealth—the brightest triumph yield ?
Ah no ! e'en now our generous rulers claim
A prouder guerdon and a purer fame.
Though gold was gained and martial glory won,
They knew their noblest task was not begun.
They held our lands, but could not hold our hearts,
Till, changing force for kindness, arms for arts,
They proffered the rich wisdom of the west,
And poorest minds with priceless treasures blest !

In this divinest duty many a heart,
With holy zeal, hath well sustained its part—
All these our guides—an honor to their land—
To our's blessing—grateful love command ;
But in the glorious list, beyond compare,
In types of light, behold the name of HARE !

Ah, warm philanthropist ! ah, faithful friend !
Thy life devoted to one generous end—
To bless the Hindu mind with British lore
And truth's and nature's faded lights restore—
If for a day that lofty aim was crost,
You grieved, like Titus, that a day was lost.
Alas ! it is not now a few brief hours
That fate withholds—a heavier grief o'erpowers
A nation whom you loved as if your own—
A life that gave the life of life is gone !

* Written at the request of several Native gentlemen.

Yet oh ! my countrymen, why weep in vain ?
 If aught may cause an earth-freed spirit pain,
 'Tis when it sees in fond hearts left below
 An unresigned and unavailing woe.
 Be sighs above the grave breathed forth no more ;
 The gods are deaf when men the past deplore ;
 But let a friend's true merit best be proved
 By imitative zeal in acts he loved.
 His memory thus with loftiest lessons rife
 May well complete the purpose of his life,
 And while our Hindu youth Mind's blessings share
 They'll learn to venerate the name of HARE !

BATTLE SONG.

ADDRESSED TO THE BRITISH SEPOYS.

I.

OH ! Warriors of India ! whose hearts are with ours,
 The foe is around us—the battle-cloud lowers—
 But the glory of England still gleameth afar,
 And the darker the tempest, the brighter her star !

II.

Oh ! Warriors of India ! o'er mountain and plain
 Our bayonets and banners shall glitter again !
 Brave comrades, unparted by colour or creed,
 Together we triumph, together we bleed !

III.

Remember, remember the deeds we have done,
 The hosts we have vanquished, the name we have won.
 Remember how long British glory endures,
 Remember how much of that glory is yours !

IV.

Hurrah—then—hurrah ! To the bright field of fame,
 The Persian we'll startle, the Muscovite tame,
 The braggarts of Birmah, the hordes of Nepaul,
 Once more shall be driven from mountain and wall !

July, 1838.

ON LITERARY FAME AND LITERARY PURSUITS

THERE is nothing more captivating than literary fame; and there are few men, who could resist its fascination if they thought it within their reach. It inflames the heart with a delicious poison. It excites a feverish thirst of praise that grows with what it feeds on, and too often destroys that healthy and tranquil tone of mind which is essential to genuine happiness. Of all human glory, it is the least allied to "a sober certainty" of enjoyment. It is generally attended with wild inquietudes, and a morbid sensibility to the strokes of fate and the mutabilities of opinion. The mariner, who trusts his life and fortunes to the treacherous ocean, regards not the varying winds of heaven with an anxiety so intense, as that with which the poet listens to the fickle voice of popular applause. The fame of the warrior occasions a comparatively temperate excitement. His exertions are chiefly physical; his achievements are palpable and defined; his honours are certain and immediate. All classes of men may judge with accuracy and precision of strength and courage, of victory or defeat. A gallant action is as warmly applauded and as fully appreciated by the artisan as by the soldier. Even the reputation of the statesman, though accompanied with greater care and perplexity of mind than the triumphs of the hero, is more open to general comprehension, and is less connected with the profound and subtle workings of the soul than the glory of the poet. The claims of literary genius are so shadowy and equivocal, so reluctantly acknowledged by those best able to decide upon their truth, and so exposed to the misapprehensions of ignorance, and the wilful injustice of jealousy or caprice, that as Pope feelingly observes, "the life of a wit is a warfare upon earth." To add to the bitterness of his misfortunes, the man of letters is of all men the least capable of battling with the world, and of supporting his influence by extraneous means. If his intellectual pretensions be disputed, he is helpless and forlorn. He ventures his whole cargo of earthly hopes in the frail bark of fame, and a wreck ruins him for ever. His habits of mind are incapable of change, and render him unfit for a new pursuit. Even when he is most successful, the public taste is so capricious and uncertain, that he cannot, like the miser, count and hoard his acquisitions. No man can calculate the precise extent of his reputation. He cannot enter it into a ledger, and exult in his daily gains. The opinions of mankind are more variable and less easily understood than the state of trade. The pilgrim to Fame's distant temple

pursues a doubtful path, and is "now in glimmer and now in gloom." He is like one who struggles through subterranean passages, and catches but occasional glimpses of the external light. Even when he gains the end of a perplexing path, and emerges into the full blaze of day, though dazzled for a while with excess of light, the freshness of the glory too quickly fades, and he pants again for new excitements. He has neither contentment nor repose. His wishes are boundless; his cares perpetual. He has a craving void in his heart that no glory can fill. The attempt to satisfy his desires is like pouring water into a broken vessel. The more he has, the more he covets. His greatest gains are small in comparison with his hopes, that are like hollow things, only swelled the more by every breath of praise. To be happy, therefore, he should effect that almost impossible triumph—a triumph over his own restless aspirations. "The man who would be truly rich," say Seneca, "must not enlarge his fortune, but lessen his appetite."

But even the painful difficulties of the pursuit of fame, and the unquenchable thirst for additional glory, are exceeded by the cares attending its possession. The fear of losing it, and the anxious charge of its preservation, keep the spirits in that eternal flutter and agitation, which joined to the effect of impassioned thought and a sedentary life, often wears away the stoutest corporeal frame, and induces that pitiable state of nervousness and hypochondriasis so common amongst literary men. The clay tenement of a fiery soul is speedily destroyed.

It is unnecessary to explain in this place the reciprocal influence of mind and matter; for that reader must be dull indeed who should require an illustration of a fact so obvious; and yet many students of medicine are apt to overlook it in their practice, while they readily assent to it as a theory. M. Tissot, the celebrated French physician, (the friend of Zimmermann,) has left a work on the diseases of literary men of so philosophical and interesting a nature, that it is surprising it should be so little known. An English translation was indeed published, many years ago, but it was never a popular work, and is now I believe extremely rare. It abounds with illustrations of the terrible effects of too much thought and emotion both on mind and body. The toils and anxieties of literature, connected with the peculiar sensibilities of genius, but too often end in insanity or death. Sterne has remarked, that "the way to fame, like the way to heaven, is through much tribulation." The witty Smollet, though a popular writer, has acknowledged the "incredible labour and chagrin" of authorship. He once fell for half a year into

that state of exhaustion, which is called a *Coma Vigil*, an affection of the brain produced by too much mental exertion, in which the faculties are in a state of stupor, and all external objects are as indistinct as in a dream. We learn from Spence, that Pope paid a similar penalty for over study ; until he was at last restored to health by the advice of Dr. Ratcliffe and the friendly attentions of the Abbé Southcot. Many an immortal work that is a source of exquisite enjoyment to mankind has been written with the blood of the author—at the expense of his happiness and of his life. Even the most jocose productions have been composed with a wounded spirit. Cowper's humorous ballad of Gilpin was written in a state of despondency that bordered upon madness. "I wonder," says the poet, in a letter to Mr. Newton, "that a sportive thought should ever knock at the door of my intellects, and still more that it should gain admittance. It is as if Harlequin should intrude himself into the gloomy chamber where a corpse is deposited in state." In a late number of the *Quarterly Review*, it was justly observed, that "our very greatest wits have not been men of a gay and vivacious disposition. Of Butler's private history, nothing remains but the record of his miseries, and Swift was never known to smile." Lord Byron, who was irritable and unhappy, wrote some of the most amusing stanzas of Don Juan in his dreariest moods. In fact, the cheerfulness of an author's style is often but a doubtful indication of the serenity of his heart.

The confessions of genius exhibit such pictures of misery and despair, as would appal the most ardent candidate for literary distinction, if it were not for that universal self-delusion which leads every man to anticipate some peculiar happiness of fortune, that may enable him to grasp the thorn-covered wreath of fame without incurring those festering wounds which have galled his predecessors or his rivals. The profession of authorship is more injurious even to corporeal health than the labours of the artisan, and is generally inconsistent with tranquillity of mind. It induces an internal fever and a glorious but fatal delirium. The seductive eloquence of Rousseau seems to gush from his heart like the sweet gum from a wounded tree. In the highly interesting pages of the elder D'Israeli, amongst many other illustrative anecdotes of a similar nature, are the following touching examples of the effect upon the mind and body of too much literary care and labour :—"Alfieri composed his impassioned works in a paroxysm of enthusiasm and with floods of tears. 'When I apply with attention,' says Metastasio, 'the nerves of my sensorium are put into a violent tumult ;

I grow red as a drunkard, and am compelled to quit my work." Beattie *dared* not correct the proofs of his Essay on Truth, because he anticipated a return of that fearful agitation of the spirits which he had felt in its composition. Tasso, perplexed by his own fears and the conflicting criticisms of his friends, was anxious to precipitate the publication of his work, that he might be 'delivered from his agony.' Dryden, in a letter to his bookseller, in alluding to the illness of his son, pathetically observes, 'If it please God that I *must die of over-study*, I cannot spend my life better than in preserving his.' Cowley, 'the melancholy Cowley,' for thus he styles himself, confesses in one of his prefaces, how much he repents the sin of rhyme; and 'if I had a son,' says he, 'inclined by nature to the same folly, I believe I should bind him from it by the strictest conjurations of a paternal blessing.'"

Few literary men would wish their children to inherit their profession. Lord Byron, in his peculiar half-comic, half-serious style, expresses his regret, that he had become an author. "If I have a wife," says he, (see his journal of 1814,) "and that wife has a son—by any body—I will bring up mine heir in the most *anti-poetical* way—make him a lawyer, or a pirate, or—any thing. But if he writes too, I shall be sure he is none of mine, and cut him off with a Bank token." The writer of this article was once with William Hazlitt, when he received a letter from his son;—I inquired if he would wish him to follow in his father's steps—"Oh! God forbid it!" was the quick and passionate reply. In a note to one of his Essays, he bitterly exclaims, "I am sick of this trade of authorship." Dr. Johnson, in the midst of all his fame, felt the miseries of a literary life, and sighed for the consolations of private friendship. While his name and his productions were the topics of general conversation, he shuddered at his "gloom of solitude," and in writing to Mrs. Thrale, he makes a touching appeal to her sympathy and tenderness: "I want every comfort: my life is very solitary and very cheerless. Let me know that I have yet a friend—let us be kind to one another." There is a querulous melancholy in the prefaces of Wordsworth that shews too clearly the state of his heart. The wasps of criticism could destroy his repose, and the neglect or ridicule even of the vulgar crowd was not always borne with a magnanimous indifference.

Literary pursuits and literary distinctions are often fatal to domestic pleasures and attachments. They render men less capable of entering cordially into those amusements that interest the mass of their fellow-creatures, and often excite

in their associates a bitter jealousy and an uneasy sense of inferiority. Some in the author see only the man, and wonder at the admiration of the world; while others in the man see only the author, and cease to regard him as a social being of the same nature with themselves. An author's station in society is always ambiguous, and liable to endless misapprehensions; he is like a stranger in a foreign land; he is *in* the crowd, but not *of* it. When his claims are too obvious to be disputed, the humble are alarmed at that superior intellectual power for which the vain and envious hate him. He is neither at his ease himself, nor are those about him. The jealous and the curious surround him like enemies and spies, and keep him ever on his guard. He can please no one. Some who are willing to admire, so raise their expectations of his greatness, that he is sure to disappoint them; and the more he shines, the more he wounds the self-love of others. Even the most generous admiration is not of long endurance, but soon flags without repeated stimulants. If the literary man does not excel himself—if every new work is not superior to the last—his friends are disappointed, and his enemies triumphant. Even the greatest glory can hardly make a man indifferent to the ceaseless hostilities which it so inevitably excites. Envy and detraction are fierce and indefatigable adversaries, whom nothing but the downfall of the object of their wrath can entirely appease. The happiness of an ambitious author is at the mercy of his meanest foes. "Oh! that mine enemy had written a book," is a wish that has entered many a malignant bosom.

"Who pants for glory finds but short repose,
A breath revives him, or a breath o'erthrows."

A hostile criticism, however false or ignorant, often leaves an immedicable wound in the breast of genius. The tender and imaginative Keats was crushed by the rude hand of Gifford, and perished like a flower in a foreign land. The unhappy Kirke White never entirely overcame the shock of an unfavourable critique on his first productions. One bitter censure outweighs a thousand eulogies.

What with the jealousy of some men, the ignorance of others, and the capriciousness of public opinion, he who rests his whole happiness on literary fame must prepare himself for the life of a slave or the death of a martyr. And yet with all these fearful drawbacks, there is something so inexpressibly charming in literary pursuits and the glory that attends them, that no man who has once fairly enrolled himself in the fraternity of authors, can relinquish his pen without reluctance and retire into ordinary life. After the intense excitement of his peculiar hopes and labours, all

other objects and employments appear "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable." Cowper quotes with a concurrence of sentiment the remark of Caraccioli, that "there is something bewitching in authorship, and that he who has once written will write again." "Who shall say," exclaims Bulwer, in his "Conversations with an ambitious Student in ill health," "whether Rousseau breathing forth his reveries, or Byron tracing the pilgrimage of Childe Harold, did not more powerfully feel the glory of the task, than the sorrow it was to immortalize? Must they not have been exalted with an almost divine gladness, by the beauty of their own ideas, *the melody of their own murmurs, the wonders of their own art?*" Dr. Johnson with a truth and nature suggested by his own experience, attributes a similar feeling to the unhappy Prince of Abyssinia. Rasselas uttered his repinings with a plaintive voice, "yet with a look that discovered him to feel some complacency in his own perspicacity, and to receive some solace of the miseries of life, from a consciousness of the delicacy with which he felt, and the eloquence with which he bewailed them."

The clear and permanent impression of the mind on a printed page is admirably adapted to the gratification of human pride. The author sees the image of his soul to the best advantage, and almost wonders at his own perfections. No youthful beauty contemplates her mirrored figure with more delight.

"'Tis pleasant sure to see one's self in print!"

He who has once passed into a book, while he exults in his own mental portrait, thus fixed as it were beyond the reach of fate, luxuriates in the anticipated admiration of the world. The printer's types are far more potent than the painter's pencil. The former represent the various movements of the mind—the latter gives the mere external frame, in one attitude and with one expression. There is additional pride in the consciousness, that in the production of the intellectual image, the printer is subservient to the author's will, while we are necessarily as passive as his canvass in the painter's hands. Our features are entirely at his mercy. We do not share the merit of his performance, though the subject is our own.*

* There is one advantage, however, in painting over printing, which is, that the productions of the artists are regarded with a deeper feeling of personal interest than those of the author; because there is no agent, like the printer, between the artist and his admirer. The work comes more directly from the man of genius himself, and the possession of it is more exclusive. There is something inexpressibly moving and delightful in the thought that the precious treasure is your own, and not the world's, and that it was literally and solely the work of the

We need not be surprised that even monarchs have been smitten with literary ambition ; for satiated with the easy and vulgar influence of adventitious advantages, they naturally desire a species of power more personal and intrinsic, as well as more permanent and extensive. A great author has a wider kingdom and a longer reign than any sovereign upon earth. Shakespeare and Milton would scarcely have exchanged places with the proudest worldly potentates. The sun-lit pinnacles of Parnassus are more glorious than a gilded chair.

No man has so exalted an opinion of his own profession as an author. "Such a superiority," says Hume, "do the pursuits of literature possess over every other occupation, that even he who attains but a mediocrity in them, merits the pre-eminence above those that excel the most in the common and vulgar professions." "An author," says Cowper, "is an important character. Whatever his merits may be, the mere circumstance of authorship warrants his approach to persons, whom otherwise perhaps he could hardly address without being deemed impertinent." It is this proud feeling, linked to the hope of fame, that makes many an unhappy author persist so passionately in his favorite studies, amidst innumerable privations and inquietudes. "I know," says Drummond,

"That all the Muse's heavenly lays
By toil of spirit are so dearly bought."

But this difficulty and labour, as he himself confesses, in no degree restrained his ardour of composition. It is said that Milton would not desist from his literary avocations, though warned by his physicians of the certain loss of his sight. He preferred his fame to his comfort.

To create those mighty works that are meant for an immortality on earth is an object of exultation, compared to which, the dignities and triumphs of kings and conquerors seem valueless and vulgar. It is a proud and glorious thing, and may elevate our conceptions of the spiritual part of our nature, to know that the wealth of even one happy

artist's fleshly yet inspired hand. We gaze at and touch the identical canvass on which that hand (perhaps long since mingled with the dust) once strenuously laboured, while we seem to hold direct communion with a being whose earthly glory is almost as imperishable as his spiritual existence. We drink in the loveliness of the same scenery that enchanted the painter's eye. We share in his enjoyment.

This personal interest in an original painting in some respects resembles, though it far exceeds, that which is excited by a celebrated person's autograph. But though a great author's manuscript may be highly interesting, it is of course in every sense less precious than a noble painting. A handwriting, though often in some degree characteristic of the writer's mind, can never be so essentially connected with genius as the work of a painter.

hour's inspiration may circulate, like a vein of gold, through the various strata of society, and enrich remotest ages ! Even the utter extinction of his mortal being is an event of comparative indifference to the impassioned poet, who inflames his eager soul with the hope of a never-dying name, and the exalting thought, that he may stir the vast sea of human hearts, when the crowd of his contemporaries shall be utterly forgotten, and his own material frame shall have long mouldered in the grave. It is an aspiration of this glorious nature that swells the breast of Wordsworth, when he fervently exclaims ;

“ Blessings be with them—and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves and nobler cares—
The poets, who on earth have made us heirs,
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays !
Oh ! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days !”

The poet's laurel is often steeped in tears, and it acquires its richest bloom upon his grave. And yet, if a great poet could anticipate his future fame, and enjoy its full influence and maturity in his life-time, his lot would perhaps be too dazzling for humanity to bear. If the mighty Milton could re-visit the scenes of his earthly pilgrimage, glorified by his halo of eternal fame, he would be almost worshipped as a god. Mankind would prostrate themselves at his feet.

There is something so ethereal in the associations connected with poetic fame, that a personal intercourse with the bard himself is usually attended with surprise and disappointment. We forget the vast difference between mind and matter—the jewel and the casket. The mortal frame seems to dwarf the spirit. We see the soul dimly through so gross a medium. Authors, unlike other objects, grow larger as they recede into the distance ; and their knowledge of human nature ought to suggest to them the imprudence of too near an approach to the common crowd. Their books are far more imposing than their persons. Fame is a complete abstraction, and even great men should remember the vulgar proverb, that “ familiarity breeds contempt.” We ordinarily observe, that if an author be more loved in his private circle than by the world, he is also less admired. The friends and associates of a man of genius are generally amongst the last to discover his intellectual greatness, and are usually surprised at his influence with the public, which they attribute to some unaccountable delusion. In private life the poet is not always poetical, nor the philosopher wise. In fact, the intense excitement of their intellectual habits renders them proportionably nerveless and relaxed in their domestic and social hours. They appear to a manifest

disadvantage in society, because, while others abandon their whole being to more transient interests and less refined enjoyments, and concentrating such energies as they may possess upon things about them, appear keen and animated, the man of genius, wearied, perhaps, by the secret toil of thought, cannot wholly disengage his mind from the higher aspirations which still haunt and agitate it like a remembered dream. He is compelled from the fear of ridicule or misapprehension to check the natural workings of his mind, to avoid his dearest and most familiar topics, and to assume an air of interest in matters respecting which he is in reality indifferent. As in society he acts an uncongenial part, he is awkward and restrained, and cannot be expected to exhibit the same ease and vivacity as those who riot in their own proper element, and give expression to the genuine dictates of their hearts. It is only when men of genius meet with kindred spirits, when mind meets mind in sparkling collision, that their vast superiority to the crowd becomes marked and obvious.

The conversation of literary men, though it may turn on their favorite subjects, is not exclusive or *professional*. It usually involves the universal interests of humanity; and all intelligent persons, of whatever class, who have studied external nature, or the human heart, or have indulged in contemplations upon the mysteries of our being, may listen to literary men with sympathy and delight. They are not only accustomed to give a higher tone to their conversation, and to choose topics of more general interest than are introduced into ordinary society, but their habit of composition facilitates the perspicuous arrangement and expression of their ideas, and guards them from the ambiguity and the want of method which in the case of less practised thinkers often destroy the effect of the most important communications. In addition to this logical order of ideas and transparency of diction, which are characteristic of literary conversation, it is usually impregnated with a spirit and fervour that would seem utterly inconsistent with the frigidity of common intercourse. They who have once been accustomed to

"Such celestial colloquies sublime"

find it impossible to reconcile themselves to the vulgar truisms and smooth inanities of fashionable talkers, amongst whom a new thought or a pleasant paradox is as startling as a rocket—interrupting their general harmony and their placid self-satisfaction. Literary men, therefore, are not fitted for society nor society for them. Both parties are rendered uneasy by the connection, and the more the former confine themselves to the company of their own class, the better for themselves and for the world. The disrespect which so often attends

the personal presence of an author may interfere with the influence of his works. His associates rarely look upon his published labours with that reverence which they excite in strangers.

This is the reason why literature is so little regarded in our "City of Palaces."* There is no such thing as fame in a small community. Men cannot easily imagine that those with whom they associate familiarly are much greater than themselves. When they see so much in the literary man that is common to all, and can only discover his superiority by an effort of abstraction, or by a reference to his writings, they soon cease to regard him with any peculiar interest. If they admire his works, it is usually with astonishment that any thing so remarkable should proceed from so ordinary a source; but generally speaking, as I have already observed, the disrespect to his person is transferred to his productions.

In a vast city like that of London, the humblest literary man may acquire more real fame, however limited, than can be obtained in Calcutta by the most successful author. In England, when a man's productions are once familiar to the public, there is a magic in his name that renders him an object of interest to his fellow-men. His person is shrouded in impenetrable obscurity, and they only catch his voice from out the gloom. But in the metropolis of British India there is no public—no mystery—no fame;—the poet seems as prosaic as the coarsest utilitarian, and the man of letters has no more influence than the merchant's clerk.

It is imagined by some, that the lover of fame is so voracious of praise, that he is indifferent to its quality. This is not the case. The smiles of vulgar patronage, or the blundering eulogies of ignorance, are always offensive and disgusting. "I love praise," says Cowper in one of his letters, "*from the judicious*, and those who have so much delicacy themselves as not to offend mine." The applause of men who are themselves eminent in literature often thrills an ambitious author with that inexpressible delight which can never be occasioned by the adulation of common minds. When Lord Byron's high opinion of Sheridan's powers was communicated to that wild but sensitive genius, he burst into a flood of tears. His joy overpowered him, and was far too intense to find relief in words.†

They who analyze their own feelings and the feelings of others, soon discover, that with various modifications, that mysterious law of our nature, which urges us to look

* Calcutta.

† See Lord Byron's Journal, published in Moore's Life of the noble Poet.

even beyond the grave and anticipate the future, operates alike on all men. The love of fame still haunts us to the last.

“E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.”*

There is scarcely a being in the world, however humble, who does not pant for some kind of notice from his fellow-men; it is in proportion to the energy of his character and the power of his intellect, that a man is disposed to challenge attention by means more or less spiritual and refined. Some persons are satisfied with a reputation of which the nature and limits appear contemptible and narrow to more ardent minds, that would fain extend their influence over distant countries and through successive ages. But this thirst for sympathy, and applause, and power is so natural to most men, and especially to the noblest natures, that as utter annihilation is inconceivable by the human mind, they project their hopes of fame with their dearest human associations beyond their mortal life.

The majority of mankind have a great horror of a clouded moral reputation resting on their graves. It is not only a regard for the interests, of survivors, which may cause us to be solicitous about our after-fame. Though a man were fully aware that he should not leave a single friend behind him who would be either injured or distressed by a stain upon his memory, it would embitter his last hours if he thought that a stigma would attach to his name when he was no longer able to contend with his calumniators. Yet the dull cold car of death is no more sensible to the voice of censure than to the voice of praise.

This concern for our future reputation seems as instinctive as our hopes of a future existence, and a continued consciousness of earthly fame is not wholly inconsistent with our notions of happiness hereafter. A great author may perhaps be permitted, even in heaven, to rejoice in that “perpetuity of praise,” which, as Milton proudly asserts, “God and good men have decreed as the reward of those whose published labours have benefitted mankind.” He may possibly look back upon this mortal world with an affectionate greeting, and cherish a blameless exultation:—

“Because on earth his name
In Fame's eternal volume shines for aye!”

* “A power above us hath instigated in the minds of all men an ardent appetite of a lasting fame. Desire of glory is the last garment that even wise men lay aside.”—*Feltham's Resolves*.

There is a good passage on this subject in Fitzosborne's *Letters*. “Can it be reasonable to extinguish a passion which nature has universally lighted up in the human breast, and which we constantly find to burn with most strength and brightness in the noblest bosoms? Accordingly Revelation is so far from endeavouring to eradicate the seed which nature has thus deeply planted, that she rather seems, on the contrary, to cherish and forward its growth. To be *eralted with honour*, and to be had in *everlasting remembrance*, are in the number of those encouragements which the Jewish dispensation offered to the virtuous.”

THE LADY TO HER BIRD

I.

GAY minstrel-bird ! Those prison bars
 Ne'er check thy song, nor chill thy breast ;
 Thy bliss no sad remembrance mars,
 No wildering visions haunt thy rest.
 The past's soft hue, the future's veil,
 With vain regrets and idle fears
 Ne'er make thy merriest music fail,
 Nor dim thine eye with tears.

II.

Alas ! a darker doom is mine,
 A dower 'tis well thou dost not share :
 For human hearts alone repine
 At pleasures past or coming care ;
 And if perchance a moment's pain
 Thy little panting breast may thrill,
 Thou dost not feed the transient bane
 With some fantastic ill.

III.

Dear bird ! The gift of one who gave
 A dearer boon,—his own true heart,
 I fain a sadder song would crave
 If thou couldst mimic sorrow's part ;
 But as the flower with bright tints dyed
 To summer's rule alone belongs,
 So thou to kindred fate allied
 Canst breathe but summer songs.

IV.

Yet oh ! when he who charmed this breast
 Is far away—what sound is sweet ?
 And earth in wintry gloom is drest
 When I no more his smile may meet.
 On thee, his living gift, I gaze—
 My hand his golden token bears—
 While he o'er unknown regions strays,
 And unknown danger dares.

V.

In vain I seized the lute he loved,
 In vain his favorite airs would try,
 The songs that once but softly moved
 My heart, now wake too wild a sigh ;
 And lighter strains but mock the mind,
 Intently turned on happier hours ;—
 The sad no charm in mirth can find,
 And kindred grief o'erpowers.

STANZAS.

I.

I LOVE on summer mornings bright
 To see the sun's uprise,
 And watch the clouds, late hid in night,
 Assume a thousand dyes.

II.

I love to see the meadows green
 Bedropped with golden flowers,
 And hear the low winds creep between
 The perfume-breathing bowers.

III.

I love to see the lucid stream
 Steal all unruffled by,
 And, fair as Fancy's fairest dream,
 Reflect a softened sky.

IV.

I love to hear the sudden sound
 Of birds amid the trees,
 The scar leaves rustling on the ground,
 The pleasant hum of bees.

V.

I love to see, like hills of snow,
 The white unmoving clouds,
 And thin gray vapours gliding slow,
 Like silent shapes in shrouds.

VI.

I love to hear o'er echoing dales
 The close air thunder-riven,
 I love to hear the roaring gales
 That lift vast seas to heaven.

VII.

All nature's sights and sounds command
 My soul's quick sympathy,
 The soft, the mystic, and the grand,
 Have each a charm for me.

VIII.

And yet I never saw the scene,
The sound I never heard,
So fair as WOMAN's face serene !
So sweet as WOMAN's word !

IX.

If prison walls shut out the sky,
Yet bade not her depart,
I'd see a sun in WOMAN's eye,
An Eden in her heart.*

LIBERTY.†

I.

THE court of OPPRESSION is crowded—
The pale mob have crouched to his power—
The face of dear England is clouded—
The slave mocks her comfortless hour ;
The noblest are goaded to madness,
The wise, and the free, and the brave :
And LIBERTY rising in sadness,
Like a spirit disturbed in the grave,
Reproachfully cries, through the gloom of the night,
“ Have the race that I loved so deserted their right ?”

II.

Oh, no ! If the basest are bowing—
The coward, the courtier, and slave—
Yet still there are hearts that are glowing,
And hands that are ready to save ;
And fatal and brief is the gladness
Of thy foes, mighty Queen of the Sea !
The despots that urge them to madness
Shall feel the revenge of the free ;
While LIBERTY hails the triumphant endeavour
Of the race she hath loved so, and *will* love for ever !

* These verses are little more than another version of the leading thought in the Sonnet on page 17. They were written to please a friend, who objected to the sonnet form.

† Written many years ago.

TRISTAN D' ACUNHA.

[A SCRAP FROM THE JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE TO INDIA, IN
THE YEAR 1819.]

A GALE of three days in the Bay of Biscay, and a fortnight's continuance of boisterous weather, made us heartily tired of our voyage. The subsequent gentle breezes and sunny skies, however, revived our spirits, and we were prepared to enjoy any agreeable novelty with a double zest. We were accordingly highly delighted when the Captain promised us a day's pleasure on the island of *Tristan d' Acunha*, as he wished to procure a supply of fresh water. As we were almost in sight of the island, and the wind was favorable, we were not kept long in suspense.

Tristan d' Acunha is the largest and most fertile of a group of three islands, situated between the Cape of Good Hope and the coast of Brazil.* It is about twenty miles in circumference. The shores of the other islands are so wild and dangerous, that it is impossible to approach them, except in the very calmest weather. The one is called *Nightingale Island*, the other, *Inaccessible*.

The north-east aspect of *Tristan d' Acunha* (the only navigable side of the island) is very striking. At the foot of an almost perpendicular mountain, about 9,000 feet high, and the sides of which are covered with brush-wood, is a fertile plain of considerable extent. The summit of the mountain is generally covered with snow, and, in clear weather, is visible at a distance of thirty leagues.

The history of *Tristan d' Acunha* is extremely interesting. The exact period of its first discovery is involved in obscurity. It was explored by the crew of a Dutch Ship in 1767, but it was known to, and named by the Portuguese some time before. I have met with no account of its intervening history between the year above mentioned and 1811. At the beginning of the latter year, it was uninhabited, until an American sailor of the name of Jonathan Lambert took possession of the island, and issued a manifesto on the occasion, signed by another American sailor of the name of Andrew Millet, who acted as his minister. How many companions, or subjects, the self-elected king possessed, I have not been able to discover. Probably they did not amount to half-a-dozen. But if they had exceeded half-a-

* In 37° 6' 9" South latitude, and in the longitude of 11° 52' East of Greenwich, and of 14° 12' 15" East of Paris.

million, his Majesty could hardly have been more lofty in his notions of regal dignity and power. In his Royal Manifesto, dated 4th of February, 1811, he formally took possession of the island of *Tristan d' Acunha*, and the two neighbouring islands. It is said, that the ambassador of the United States of North America recognized this new power, and became in some degree King Lambert's agent, and supplied him with plants and seeds.

In 1813, the Governor of the Cape of Good Hope sent his Majesty, the king of *Tristan d' Acunha*, a small vessel, containing five respectable families, who voluntarily offered to become his subjects. The sailor king, through his agent at the Cape, applied for the alliance and assistance of the Governor of that colony, of the British Government, and of the East India Company. The former supplied his wants and recognized his rights; but what answer he received from the two latter, is not distinctly recorded. It is said, however, that the British Government sent him a liberal supply of horned cattle, sheep, goats and other things necessary to the prosperity and advancement of the young colony; but it is very doubtful whether or not it took any formal notice of his Majesty's claim to the property of the island. In his manifesto he talks amusingly of "chicanery" and of "the laws of Nations." In a Hydrographical work, published in London, in 1816, the author wishes success to this new dynasty. "May an enterprize," says he, "so honorable to its author, and so beneficial to humanity, have the success it merits! Every honest mariner must cordially join in this wish." I have not seen the work here alluded to, and only repeat the quotation as it is given in a passage from the *Correspondance Astronomique* of Baron de Zach, which found its way into the newspapers in 1821.

We had scarcely cast anchor off the island, before two men in a small boat, were seen hastening towards us. When arrived on board, they expressed the liveliest pleasure at our visit, as no ship had touched there for a long period. They informed us that they were the only men residing on the island, and that the wife of one of them was their only female companion. The husband was an Englishman, and had once been a respectable and wealthy farmer in Yorkshire; but having been utterly ruined by a long train of misfortunes, he and his wife were persuaded by an old acquaintance, the Captain of a Merchant-ship, to accompany him, passage free, to New Holland, and try their fortunes in that distant colony. The ship having occasion to touch at *Tristan d' Acunha*, the farmer and his wife were so charmed with its appearance, that they determined to remain on the island, instead of pro-

ceeding on their voyage. After vainly urging them to the contrary, the Captain supplied them with a quantity of European seeds, two cows, a few sheep and poultry, and such other provisions as his ship could afford. Being pressed for time he soon left them to their fate. There was not a human being on the island except themselves; but it was evident that persons had resided there some months before, and they found a hut ready for their reception, and several acres of land bore traces of recent cultivation.

"Our adventurers had been nearly a year on the island, when a Dutch trader was compelled to touch there for a supply of fresh water, and one of the crew, being persecuted by the Captain, concealed himself on the island until the departure of the vessel. He was kindly received by the Yorkshire farmer, and had remained with him to the period of our arrival. The Dutchman, however, was now weary of the life he led at *Tristan d'Acunha*, and entreated our Captain to let him work out his passage to Calcutta as a common sailor. No objection being made to his request, the man seemed as pleased as if he had escaped from a prison. He expressed, nevertheless, considerable regret at parting with his companions.

After presenting the farmer with a few books, some woollen clothes, a barrel or two of gunpowder and a supply of flour, rice and biscuit, we accompanied him on shore, and were delighted with the air of comfort and prosperity around his little dwelling. His wife, a good looking woman, very neatly dressed, met us at the door-way. In reply to our questions, they assured us, that as they had no children and few relatives, they had not the slightest desire to return to England for some years; but when the infirmities of age came heavily upon them, they should gladly quit their solitary abode, and spend the evening of existence in their native country. They were now, however, in the prime of life, and perfectly contented with their lot. They listened, with an honest pride, to our expressions of surprise at the flourishing condition of the land they had cultivated. The climate being remarkably temperate, and the soil light, they had brought to perfection a variety of fruits and vegetables, both tropical and European, which, perhaps, were never before seen mingled together on the same spot of earth. In their farm-yard they had the two cows, before mentioned, a considerable number of English pigs, sheep, and goats, with poultry enough, if necessary, to supply their table daily. They seldom, however, killed any of these, as wild boars, wild goats, and a species of black cock, abound on the island; while in the deep waters among the rocks, there are fish of

almost every description. The mountain is literally covered with sea-hens, petrels, albatrosses, and the various other feathered tribes which haunt the Southern Atlantic. As seals and sea-elephants are very plentiful, our islanders had preserved a quantity of skins and oil to barter for other goods, with any ship that might happen to touch at *Tristan d'Acunha*. Having supplied ourselves with as much water as we required, and a few fresh vegetables, we bade farewell to this romantic little island, and its two interesting inhabitants.*

SONNET—NATURE.

THE breezy cliff, the softly-swelling hill,
The quiet valley, and the cheerful plain,
The calm romantic lake, the rolling main,
Are now my haunts ! Their varied graces fill
My soul with pleasant dreams, and soothe and still
The passions' strife, and fever of the brain.
Oh ! how resistless thy mysterious reign,
Benignant Nature ! O'er the sense of ill
Thy smiles have holy power ! When the proud glow
Of wild ambition fades, and the world's brow
Grows stern and dark, thy lone but fair domain
Is Sorrow's sweetest home. There cold disdain
Ne'er wakes the tear of unregarded woe,
Nor sickening envy dreads a rival's gain.

* I have not seen Mr. Augustus Earle's account of a Residence at *Tristan d'Acunha*, but I gather from the notice of, and the extracts from it, in the *Quarterly Review*, that in July, 1824, when he landed for the purpose of taking a few sketches of the rude but magnificent scenery of the island, a gale sprang up, which rendered it impossible for the ship to remain off the dangerous reefs that surround it, and the artist was left on the beach with nothing but his sketch book and his pencils. At this time, however, the island was colonized by a small body of his countrymen, consisting chiefly of sailors, and all of them very illiterate, and of humble origin. They received him kindly, and though it was ten months before a ship touched at the place, and enabled him to escape from his imprisonment, he seems to have become somewhat reconciled to his fate, and less unhappy and impatient than he was during the first week or two after the departure of his ship. A Scotchman of the name of Glass, was then at the head of the little colony. What became of King Lambert, I have never heard. At the commencement of Napoleon's imprisonment at St. Helena, *Tristan d'Acunha* was garrisoned with British troops, but the place was soon abandoned. A gentleman, who neared the island in 1832, informs me that there were only two men there at that time, and that they came off to the ship in a small boat. The weather prevented the ship from coming to an anchor, and none of the passengers were permitted to land.

THE FINAL TOAST.

A MASONIC SONG.

"ARE your glasses charged in the West and South?" the
 Worshipful Master cries;
 "They are charged in the West,"—"They are charged in
 the South," are the Wardens' prompt replies;
 "Then to our final toast to-night your glasses fairly drain—
 "HAPPY TO MEET—SORRY TO PART—HAPPY TO MEET AGAIN!"

II.

The Mason's social brotherhood around the festive board,
 Reveal a wealth more precious far than selfish misers hoard;
 They freely share the priceless stores that generous hearts
 contain—
 "HAPPY TO MEET—SORRY TO PART—HAPPY TO MEET AGAIN!"

III.

We work like Masons free and true, and when our task is done,
 A merry song and a cheering glass are not unduly won;
 And only at our farewell pledge is pleasure touched with pain—
 "HAPPY TO MEET—SORRY TO PART—HAPPY TO MEET AGAIN!"

IV.

Amidst our mirth we drink "To all poor Masons o'er the
 world"—
 On every shore our flag of love is gloriously unfurled;
 We prize each brother, fair or dark, who bears no moral
 stain—
 "HAPPY TO MEET—SORRY TO PART—HAPPY TO MEET AGAIN!"

V.

The Mason feels the noble truth the Scottish peasant told,
 That rank is but the guinea's stamp, the man himself's the
 gold;
 With us the rich and poor unite and equal rights maintain—
 "HAPPY TO MEET—SORRY TO PART—HAPPY TO MEET
 AGAIN!"

VI.

Dear brethren of the mystic tie, the night is waning fast—
 Our duty's done—our feast is o'er—this song must be our last.
 Good-night—Good-night—once more, once more, repeat the
 farewell strain—
 "HAPPY TO MEET—SORRY TO PART—HAPPY TO MEET AGAIN!"*

* This song has been set to music, and for some years past has been sung
 at every meeting of almost all the Lodges in Bengal. I am told it is also adopted
 in many Lodges in Scotland and elsewhere. The music may be had of Messrs.
 Baskin Young and Company of Calcutta.

TEN YEARS AND MORE.

TO —

I.

TEN years and more—ten years and more,
 Have glided swiftly by,
 Since first upon our native shore
 We felt the social tie,
 And little thought at fate's command
 To meet upon this distant land.

II.

Ten years and more—ten years and more !—
 A cloud is on my heart !
 For like the knell of pleasures o'er
 When Life's best dreams depart,
 These words from drear Oblivion's pall
 Dim throngs of shrouded hopes recall.

III.

Ten years and more—ten years and more !—
 These breathings of the past—
 These murmurs on Times's twilight shore
 Far heard o'er 'memory's waste,'
 Arrest awhile the dreaming ear
 Like sounds that home-sick wanderers hear.

IV.

Ten years and more !—ten years and more !—
 With sad reverted gaze
 I mark the long road travelled o'er
 In anguish and amaze !
 How many a fearful path was crost !
 How many a dear companion lost !

V.

Ten years and more !—ten years and more
 Have all been overcast ;
 And yet 'tis idle to deplore
 The darkness of the past ;
 'Twere better that my soul should hail
 The stars that pierce the future's veil.

LORD BYRON'S OPINION OF POPE

LORD BYRON had always a nervous horror of floating with the stream, and was never inclined to express any other opinions than those which he knew to be in direct opposition to the general judgment of mankind, more especially of his own contemporaries. Perhaps it was partly this feeling that led him to undervalue Shakespeare and make Pope his idol. In the Pope and Bowles controversy Lord Byron was any thing but triumphant, notwithstanding the flippant dogmatism of his style, which presented a strong contrast to the moderate, candid, and argumentative productions of his opponent, who though a writer vastly inferior to Lord Byron in poetical genius, had certainly the advantage over him in a sober critical disquisition. One cannot help suspecting that this was less owing to a deficiency of taste and judgment on the part of Byron than to a downright want of sincerity. With all his swaggering he must have been perfectly conscious that he was taking up the wrong side of the question, when he spoke of Pope as the greatest poet in the world.

Mr. Bowles was strangely misrepresented and misunderstood in this discussion, though he simply maintained the theory of Warton, that images drawn from nature, human and external, are more poetical *per se* than those drawn from works of art and artificial manners. I have not a copy of Bowles's pamphlet in my possession, and have not read it since the time of its first publication; but I well recollect the general tenor of its reasoning, and my surprise at the mistakes or wilful misapprehensions of Byron. It may seem presumptuous to speak in this strain of so great a man. But very dull eyes may discover spots in the sun, and very ordinary persons may be alive to the faults or weaknesses of their superiors.* I shall give a specimen or two of his arguments.

"I opposed," says he, "and will ever oppose the robbery of ruins from Athens, to instruct the English in sculpture; but why did I do so? The ruins are as poetical in Piccadilly as they were in the Parthenon, but the Parthenon and its rocks are less so without them. Such is the poetry of art."

To assert that these detached fragments of art are as poetical in a confined and crowded court in London, as in the place from which they were taken, surrounded by picturesque and classical scenes and associations, is manifestly absurd. The same line of argument would prove that a boat high and dry in a dock-yard or in a carpenter's ware-

* When Lord Byron on his death-bed sent for "an old and ugly witch," or after presenting a gold pin to a lady, entreated its return, because it was unlucky to give any thing with a point, a man of an intellect inferior to the poet's might very fairly smile at his superstition.

house is as poetical an object as the same boat when filled with human beings, tossing on the troubled sea, or sleeping by sunset on a glassy lake. Works of art are not poetical *per se*, but as connected with external nature and human passions.

"Mr. Bowles contends, again, that the pyramids of Egypt are poetical, because of 'the association with boundless deserts,' and that a 'pyramid of the same dimensions would not be sublime in Lincoln's Inn Fields;' not *so* poetical certainly; but take away the pyramids, and what is the desert?"

The desert would still be poetical without the pyramids, but not so the pyramids without the desert. Mr. Bowles would readily admit that the taking away the pyramids would *lessen* the poetry of the desert, because the *human associations* suggested by works of art would add greatly to the interest of any scenery, however beautiful and poetical in itself. In the same way the ocean in a storm is a strikingly poetical object, but its poetry is heightened by the associations of danger and suffering connected with the sight of a ship. It is not the appearance of the mere planks or the mechanical construction of the ship, but the probable emotions and anxieties of those on board, and the uncertainty of their fate, that touches the heart and awakens the imagination.

"To the question, whether the description of a game of cards be as poetical, supposing the execution equal, as a description of a walk in a forest? it may be answered, that the materials are certainly not equal; but that the *artist* who has rendered a game of cards poetical, is by far the greater of the two. But all this ordering of poets is purely arbitrary on the part of Mr. Bowles. There may, or may not be, in fact, different orders of poetry; but the poet is always ranked according to his execution, and not according to his branch of the art."

Who does not see the fallacy of this? Will any body maintain that the best satire that was ever written is as poetical as the best epic poem, or entitles the author to the same rank in literature. He whose work is the most *poetical* is the best poet, and not he who exhibits the most skill in treating unpoetical subjects. Dryden's *Absalom* and *Achitophel* is as well handled, perhaps, as Milton's *Paradise Lost*; but which production is the most poetical, and which author is the greatest poet? Is the author of the most excellent sonnet equal in rank to the author of the most excellent tragedy? Certainly not. Dryden has said, that "an Heroic Poem, truly such, is undoubtedly the greatest work which the soul of man is capable to perform." Could he have said this of an epigram without exciting a universal laugh? * A poet who

* Dr. South, however, foolishly asserted that a perfect epigram is as difficult as an epic poem, and Pope very justly ridiculed him for it in the Dunciad.

How many Martials were in Pulteney lost!
Else sure some bard to our eternal praise
In twice ten thousand rhyming nights and days,
Had reared the work, the all that mortal can,
And South beheld that masterpiece of man!

executes an inferior subject with uncommon skill is entitled to a place above him who executes a sublime one in a mediocre manner; but *when the execution is equal*, the subject decides the superiority. A lofty subject requires a greater grasp of intellect and a more vigorous imagination than a humble one, and therefore the author of the *Paradise Lost* or of the tragedy of *Macbeth* would always rank above the author of the most poetical description of a game of cards that was ever written, because no human power could render it so eminently poetical as those two immortal productions. Lord Byron, however, very strenuously maintains that "the poet who *executes* best is the highest, whatever his department."* And what is still more strange and inconsistent, after asserting that there are no "orders" in poetry, or that if there be, the poet is ranked by his execution not his subject, he elevates Pope above all other writers of verse on the ground of his being the best *ethical* poet, and ethical poetry being of the highest rank.† If Bentham's prose ethics were put into good verse, they would, according to this decision, be finer poetry than the works of Homer, Shakespeare or Milton.

Pope talks continually about Pope's *faultlessness*, forgetting what that elegant writer himself observes—

"Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be ;"

* A pig by Morland might be as well done as an angel by Raphaele, but this would not make the former artist entitled to the same rank amongst painters as the latter.

† Lord Byron's poetical creed, if sincere, is indeed unaccountable; but it is more easy to reconcile ourselves to the belief, that he often expressed on poetical, as on many other subjects, not so much his own opinions as those that he thought would most puzzle and surprise. His whole life seemed to be devoted to creating a *sensation*. He even made himself out a monster of iniquity, that he might become an object of wonder and speculation. His hatred of England and the English people, his scorn of mankind in general, his disbelief in virtue, and his contempt for fame, were all the grossest affectation, and had no real existence in his heart, as his conduct showed. He betrayed on several occasions and in many ways an intense desire to attract and retain the attention of the English public—he was singularly affectionate and kind to all who came in contact with him—was always ready and had frequent reason to acknowledge the virtues of his friends or enemies—had many noble traits in his own character—and devoted the greater part of his life to the acquisition of a name! The failure of his tragedies was the cause of excessive chagrin and mortification, and though he always talked with apparent indifference of such of his poems as were certain of success, he could not help defending, with an uneasy and eager fondness, the less fortunate offspring of his brain. His translation of Pulci and his "Hints from Horace," because every body else considered them unworthy of his genius, and treated them with neglect, were always spoken of by him as his best productions. It is curious to observe, that notwithstanding his pretended indifference to criticism, he was evidently very anxious to stand well with the leading critics. There was something not very creditable to his independence, and certainly very inconsistent with the open and vigorous straightforwardness of his general character, in the almost servile attention which he paid

and towards the conclusion of his letter, his Lordship says that if any great national or natural convulsion could or should overwhelm Great Britain and sweep it from the kingdoms of the earth, and leave only a *dead language*, an Englishman anxious that the posterity of strangers should know that there had been such a thing as a British Epic and Tragedy, might wish for the preservation of Shakespeare and Milton ; but the surviving world would snatch Pope from the wreck, and let the rest sink with the people. Even the name of Byron will not shelter the absurdity of this observation, or make me hesitate to protest against so preposterous a conclusion. Amongst other strange things in this letter is his Lordship's assertion that "COWPER IS NO POET ;" which assertion is soon followed by another, that Cowper's lines addressed to his Nurse, by no means one of his best performances, are "*eminently poetical and pathetic!*"

Pope has no doubt been greatly undervalued by the critics of the present day, though Lord Byron, who was jealous of the Lake School, and at once abused and imitated its productions, ran into the opposite extreme, and endeavoured to bring such men as Wordsworth and Southey into ridicule and contempt by invidious comparisons. Pope was a very exquisite and admirable poet, and with considerable hesitation with reference to the rival claims of Dryden, may perhaps be said to be at the very head of the artificial school of poetry. But though he may be allowed to be the

to Gifford, a man who had very little in common with the noble bard. To the tail of almost every letter to Murray he appended his respectful compliments to the Editor of the *Quarterly*, and always submitted his poems with extraordinary deference to that critic's judgment. In opposition to this I might be referred to his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, as a proof of his literary fearlessness : but that was a youthful indiscretion, which he lived to repent. I make these remarks with no intention to depreciate the general manliness of his character, but to show that his anxiety to secure a favourable notice of his productions made him condescend to a humility very foreign to his nature. Not only was Byron anxious to secure the praises of his critics, but he was thrown into an agony of vexation, by such errors of the press, as were likely to lay him open to their censure. That he would have *bribed*, with money, "his Grandmother's Review, The British," to praise him, is not very likely ; but it is amusing to learn from one of his letters, that so anxious was he, that his muse should not appear in a disadvantageous dress, that when he heard of some one having made an indifferent translation of his *Manfred* into Italian, he immediately offered him any sum of money that he expected to obtain by his project, if he would throw the translation into the fire, and promise not to meddle with his Lordship's poems for the future. Having ascertained, that the utmost the man could expect for his version, was 200 francs, Lord Byron offered him that sum, if he would desist from publishing. The Italian, however, held out for more, and could not be brought to terms, until Byron threatened to horsewhip him. He at last took the 200 francs and gave up his manuscript, entering at the same time into a written engagement never to translate any more of the noble poet's works. I believe this is the first instance on record of a man having been paid *not* to translate a poem. The Italian seems to have been a ludicrous specimen of a mercenary author ; he pocketed both the compliment and the cash with equal coolness.

first in his peculiar walk, he must rank comparatively low in the higher department of his art. That lofty enthusiasm, that passionate admiration of external nature, and that profound knowledge of the human heart which are so conspicuous in the dramas of the immortal Shakespeare, we should look for in vain amongst the condensed couplets and labored elegancies of Pope. At the same time it is not to be inferred that he has *no* enthusiasm, *no* sense of the charms of nature, *no* insight into the human heart ; for he possesses all these qualities, in a certain degree : but they are not equal in depth and intensity to the same qualities in the highest order of poets, nor do they constitute the predominant characteristics of his mind.

Perhaps the sound sense, the fine irony, the tact for personal ridicule or eulogy, and the intimate acquaintance with polite society and artificial habits, for which Pope was so remarkably distinguished, have led the generality of critics to overlook or undervalue the more purely poetical qualities which he certainly possessed, though in a less eminent degree.*

It is strange that Lord Byron and the other defenders of Pope, have not brought forward the various proofs which are to be found in his works of his powers of description ; for Warton and Bowles have laid great stress on his palpable deficiency in this important qualification of a true poet. Pope's translation of the Moon-light Scene in the Iliad is spoken of by Wordsworth with contempt, though a complimentary allusion is made to the "Windsor Forest." It is worth while quoting his remarks :—

"It is remarkable that, excepting the Nocturnal Reverie of Lady Winchelsea, and a passage or two in the Windsor Forest of Pope, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of Paradise Lost and the Seasons does not contain a single new image of external nature ; and scarcely presents a

* Lord Carlisle has lately delivered a public lecture upon the writings of Pope at a mechanic's institution. It is a pleasant sign of the times :—a nobleman lecturing on poetry to mechanics ! I have not met with a complete report of the lecture, but from the few extracts that I have seen, I am inclined to believe that his Lordship's estimate of Pope's genius is a very fair one. He deplores the fact that Pope is "sunk in estimation." Pope was, no doubt, greatly over-rated down to the time of the Wartons, and after that period a new tone of criticism, and a change in poetical taste, led to a contrary extreme in all notices of a poet who was regarded as the great leader of the artificial French-English School. Pope has, for some time past, been so extravagantly ill-treated, that there is now a reaction in his favour. The Commissioners of the Fine Arts evinced much discretion and good taste in their selection of the six busts of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Dryden and Pope—to occupy the vacant niches in the New Palace of Westminster. These names are the six great poetical landmarks of the past, and if it had been proposed to exclude any one of them to make way for a more recent name, the Commissioners would have been involved in very delicate perplexities and disputes. Time is the best arbiter of such questions.

familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of the poet had been steadily fixed upon his object, much less than his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination. To what a low state knowledge of the most obvious and important phenomena had sunk, is evident from the style in which Dryden had executed a description of Night in one of his Tragedies, and Pope his translation of the celebrated Moon-light Scene in the *Iliad*. A blind man, in the habit of attending accurately to descriptions casually dropped from the lips of those around him, might easily depict their appearances with more truth. Dryden's lines are vague, bombastic and senseless ; * those of Pope, though he had Homer to guide him, are throughout false and contradictory.† The verses of Dryden, once highly celebrated, are forgotten ; those of Pope still retain their hold upon public estimation—nay there is not a passage of descriptive poetry, which at this day finds so many ardent admirers."

Instead of supporting Pope on his strong ground of the "Windsor Forest," Lord Byron with his usual love of opposition confines himself wholly to a consideration of this Moon-light Scene, which he contends is full of truth and beauty. Now what can be more common-place and indistinct than such phrases and epithets as "refulgent lamp of night"—"sacred light"—"the vivid planets roll"—"gild the glowing pole"—"a flood of glory," &c. &c. ? They are precisely of that description which one would expect to meet with in the verses of a school-boy, and present no clear picture to the mind. A living writer has done more justice to the same well-known passage. I allude to Mr. Elton. Every reader who is at all versed in the elegant literature of the day, is familiar with the merits of that gentleman, whose translations of the poets of Greece and Rome are rarely denied an honorable place in a well-selected library. It is now almost universally admitted, that Pope, as a translator, is too ornate and takes too many liberties with the venerable blind bard of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. He has made an odd mixture of ancient simplicity and modern finery. The superiority of Cowper's translation of Homer to that of Pope, would be more apparent, if the poet of Olney had not been so fearful of falling into the errors of his immediate predecessor as to sin in a contrary and less popular extreme. His version is too studiously bare. It cannot be denied that he has sometimes passed the limits of a poetical simplicity, and has fallen into a prosaic meanness. But he is not always so unfortunate, and no

* The following is the passage alluded to by Wordsworth. Rymer regarded it with ecstatic admiration.

"All things are hushed as Nature's self lay dead :
The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head :
The little birds in dreams their songs repeat,
And sleeping flowers beneath the night dews sweat ,
E'en lust and envy sleep ; yet love denies
Rest to my soul and slumber to my eyes."

† Melmoth says that Pope's translation of this passage surpasses the original.

reader of true taste would hesitate to prefer his translation of the celebrated Moon-light Scene, to that of Pope. Surely there is something simple, natural, and, in a word, *Homeric*, in the following passage, that it would be in vain to look for in the couplets of his predecessor.

As when around the clear, bright moon, the stars
Shine in full splendour, and the winds are hushed ;
The groves, the mountain tops, the headland heights,
Stand all apparent : not a vapour streaks
The boundless blue ; but ether, opened wide,
All glitters, and the shepherd's heart is cheered.

This is incomparably better than the stuff in Pope, about "*conscious swains eyeing the blue vault*," and "*blessing the useful* light*." Elton's translations have often much of the simplicity of Cowper's, and though in the same passage he is less successful than Cowper, his version has far more nature than Pope's.

As beautiful the stars shine out in heaven
Around the splendid moon, no breath of wind
Ruffling the calm blue ether ; cleared from mist
The beacon hill-tops, crags and forest dells
Emerge in light ; the immeasurable sky
Breaks from above and opens on the gaze ;
The multitude of stars are seen at once
Full sparkling, and the shepherd looking up
Feels gladdened at his heart.

The lines, however, with which Pope follows up this passage are highly animated and picturesque :—

The long reflections of the distant fires
Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires ;
A thousand piles the dusky horrors gild,
And shoot a shady lustre o'er the field.
Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,
Whose unnumbered arms by fits thick flashes send ;
Loud neigh the coursers o'er their heaps of corn,
And ardent warriors wait the rising morn.

Mr. Theodore Alois Buckley has just published a prose version of the *Iliad* of Homer. The title-page says that it is "*literally* translated," and the London critics complain that it is *too* literal. By his making the language neither Greek nor English—using English epithets with many Grecian links—epithets which so used do not fully imply what is implied in the original—Mr. Buckley in his prose translation is literal without being correct, that is to say, in the highest sense of the words. We are sorry for this, because a really good prose version of Homer is a great desideratum,

* This is quite a Utilitarian epithet !

but this seems to be a book better fitted to help a learner of the Greek language than an admirer of Grecian poetry.

BUCKLEY'S PROSE TRANSLATION.

"As when in heaven the stars appear very conspicuous around the lucid moon, when the ether is wont to be without a breeze, and all the pointed rocks and lofty summits and groves appear, and in heaven the immense ether is disclosed, and all the stars are seen, and the shepherd rejoices in his soul."

Let us take from an old number of *Blackwood's Magazine* Christopher North's prose translation of this passage, that the reader may compare it with Mr. Buckley's.

CHRISTOPHER NORTH'S PROSE TRANSLATION.

But as when the stars in heaven, around the shining moon,
Shine beautiful, when the air is windless,
And all the eminences appear, and pinnacles of the heights
And groves ; and the immeasurable firmament bursts (or expands from below,)
And all the stars are seen ; and the shepherd rejoices in his heart :—

Here is Sotheby's translation :—

As when the stars at night's illumin'd noon
Beam in their brightness round the full-orb'd moon,
When sleeps the wind, and every mountain height,
Rock, and hoar cliff, shine towering up in light,
Then gleam the vales, and ether, widely riven,
Expands to other stars another heav'n,
While the lone shepherd, watchful of his fold,
Looks wondering up, and gladdens to behold.

While upon the subject of Pope's merits, I cannot refrain from further quotations, and as his *descriptive* powers have never yet received that attention, which they deserve, I shall lay a few brief specimens before the reader.

See ; from the brake the *whirring* pheasant springs,
And mounts exulting on triumphant wings ;
Short is his joy ; he feels the fiery wound,
Flutters in blood and panting beats the ground.
Ah what avail his *glossy varyng dyes*,
His *purple crest and scarlet circled eyes*,
The vivid green his shining plumes unfold,
His painted wings and breast that flames with gold ?*

With slaughtering gun th' unwearied fowler roves,
When frosts have whitened all the naked groves ;
Where doves in flocks the leafless trees o'ershade,
And lonely woodcocks haunt the watery glade,

* This description, however, reminds us a little too much of Thomas Paine's celebrated sarcasm—*Mr. Burke pities the plumage, but neglects the dying bird.* Pope rather injudiciously draws off our attention from the bird's sufferings to make us admire its feathers. The fourth line is perfect.

He lifts the tube, and levels with his eye :
 Straight a *short thunder* breaks the frozen sky :
Oft as in airy rings they skim the heath
 The clamorous lapwings feel the leaden death ;
 Oft as the mounting larks their notes prepare,
 They fall, and leave their little lives in air !

Far as creation's ample range extends,
 The scale of sensual mental power ascends :
 Mark how it mounts to man's imperial race,
From the green myriads in the peopled grass ;
 What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,
The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam ;
 Of smell, the *heav'ly lioness between,*
And hound sagacious on the tainted green ;
 Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood,
To that which warbles through the vernal wood !
 The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine !
 Feels at each thread, and *lives along the line.*

These passages, (to which could be added many others of equal excellence from the same writer,) are highly picturesque, and ought to have made the Lake poets treat the name of Pope with a little more respect. They as extravagantly depreciated his powers as Lord Byron over-rated them.

As I have quoted Wordsworth's allusion to the *Nocturnal Reverie* of the Countess of Winchelsea, and as that poem is not likely to be familiar to many of my readers, I will introduce a short extract from it.

" When darkened groves their softest shadows wear,
And falling waters we distinctly hear :
 When through the gloom more venerable shows
 Some ancient fabric, awful in repose :
 While sunburnt hills their swarthy looks conceal,
 And swelling hay-cocks thicken up the vale :
When the loosed horse, now, as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing through the adjoining meads,
Whose stealing pace, and lengthened shute we fear,
Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear : &c., &c."

Wordsworth in the following night-scene, taken from one of his sonnets, appears to have had the natural and striking images contained in the last four lines of the passage just extracted, very strongly in his mind.

" Calm is all nature as a resting wheel ;
 The kine are couched upon the dewy grass ;
The horse alone, seen dimly as I pass,
Is cropping audibly his later meal."

Hurdis, in his *Favorite Village*, has also a similar description :—

" The grazing ox
 His dewy supper from the savoury herbs
Audibly gathering."

Wordsworth abounds in natural images of admirable truth and beauty, which linked as they usually are to lofty and philosophical thoughts, form some of the most delightful poetry in the language. Here is a companion picture to Pope's "*lonely woodcocks*." It is from one of Wordsworth's juvenile productions.

" Sweet are the sounds that mingle from afar,
 Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding star,
Where the duck dabbles 'mid the rustling sedge,
 And feeding pikes start from the water's edge,
 Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and bill
 Wetting, *that drip upon the water still ;*
 And heron, as resounds the trodden shore
 Shoots upward, *darting his long neck before.*"

The *duck dabbling* in the above passage reminds me of a ludicrous but very descriptive line of Southey's in a Sonnet to a Goose :—

" *Or waddle wide, with flat and flabby feet,*
 Over some Cambrian mountain's *plushy* moor."

A DULL CALM.

THE moon is high,
 But still her beam
 Is pale, and partly shrouded ;—
 Unmoving vapours stain the sky,—
 The slumbering lake is clouded,
 Yet looks so calm 'tis hard to deem
 The tempest e'er hath ploughed it !

The groves are hushed,—
 And not a breath
 Disturbs their coverts green,—
 No boughs by fluttering wings are brushed,—
 Still hang the dew-drops sheen ;—
 'Tis like the fearful reign of death—
 A solemn trance serene !

It is an hour
 That well might fill
 The lightest heart with sadness ;—
 The silent gloom around hath power
 To banish aught of gladness—
 The good with awful dreams to thrill—
 The guilty—drive to madness !

THE FATE OF THE BRAVE.

I.

THE Hero conquers pain and death
 Who proudly yields a transient breath
 For immortality ;
 A dark oblivion doth not fall
 Around him, like a funeral pall,
 As when the dull herd die !

II.

But oft his glory forms the light
 That never dies of visions bright
 That gifted bards inflame ;—
 And ever like a guiding star
 It gilds the rough red seas of war,
 And shows the path to fame.

III.

Though pale and tremulous lips may swear
 That life is sweet and fame is air,
 The taunt ne'er stirs the brave ;
 For oh ! how pitiful and brief
 The life that like a scentless leaf
 Can charm not from the grave.

IV.

The purest spirits of the sky
 May still revert with partial eye
 To all they loved below,
 And, while their honored offspring share
 The lustre of the name they bear,
 With tender transport glow.

V.

Oh ! who then would not dare the death
 That heroes die, and seize the wreath
 No mortal blast may blight ?
 The general doom that mocks his kind
 He half defies who leaves behind
 A trail of living light !

MENTAL CHANGES.

As o'er the fairest skies
 The dream-like shadows steal,
 So dim mysterious cares surprise
 The heart whose human weal
 Would seem secure from aught less bright
 Than pleasure's broad congenial light.

As when this outward world
 Attracts the mortal eye,
 A vapour on the light air curled
 Between us and the sky
 May make its blue depths cold and dun,
 And place in brief eclipse the sun ;

So in the realms of mind,
 The meanest things have power,
 With thoughts as wayward as the wind
 When fitful tempests lour,
 The loveliest hues of life to cloud,
 And Hope's resplendent orb enshroud.

SONNET—TO ENGLAND.

FAIR England ! thine untravell'd sons may bear
 A tranquil sense of thy surpassing worth,
 As those who ne'er have parted from their birth
 In faith serene their social comforts share ;
 But he, alone, doth feel how deeply dear
 The charms of home, who wildly wandering forth
 To distant realms, finds dreariness and dearth
 E'en where kind Nature's lavish blooms appear.
 Around his path bright scenes unheeded lie,
 For these are tinged not with his early dreams—
 His heart is far away ! Thy varied sky
 Dappling the silent hills with clouds and gleams—
 Thy nest-like cottages and silver streams—
 Are all that catch the wanderer's dreaming eye !

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE inherited a share of his father's genius, and but too much also of his indolence and irregularity and infirmity of will. He was a day-dreamer from his childhood. When a boy of ten years of age, he was the wonder, not only of the elder Coleridge, but of less partial judges—of Southey, Wordsworth, Wilson, Lamb, and De Quincey. If ever genius was decidedly indicated in the earliest dawn of life, it was in the case of Hartley Coleridge. As a little boy he was a Shelley in miniature; a constant visitor of Dream-land. He was a metaphysician, too, long before he had words at his command in which to embody the thoughts that perpetually stirred and perplexed his inner being. When he went to college, he soon convinced his fellow-students that he had all his father's eloquence.

He took the prisoned soul,
And lapt it in Elysium.

Like Chatterton, he was, indeed, "a marvellous boy;" but though he lived to the age of 51, he never, we think, quite fulfilled the extraordinary promise of his early spring. He appears to have been subject to attacks of low spirits. He had a passionate yearning for the sympathy of his fellow-creatures of all classes, and a restless love of admiration, fostered by the court paid to his society on account of his conversational powers. This led him too often into excesses that probably checked the progress of his intellect. "His sensibility," says his brother, Derwent Coleridge, "was intense, and he had not wherewithal to control it. He could not open a letter without trembling. He shrank from mental pain—he was beyond measure impatient of constraint. He was liable to paroxysms of rage, often the disguise of pity, self-accusation or other painful emotion—anger it could hardly be called—during which he bit his arm or finger violently." Gifted, but unhappy—his genius rather a curse than a blessing—he might well have envied the simple peasants with whom he loved to talk;—still more might he have envied the many happy children who were as dear to him as if they were his own, and whose society so often shed a gleam of sunshine on his clouded mind.

The first of the two volumes of the memoir and poems of Hartley Coleridge lately published, is embellished with a beautiful portrait of the poet at the age of 10 from the

pencil of the celebrated Wilkie. The large full eye is already singularly expressive of sensibility, and thought, and passion, and genius, and alas, of sorrow!

We have looked over the poems of Hartley Coleridge, with a deep sympathy for the author, and with a strong disposition to think the best of his productions. But upon the whole they disappoint us. They are unmistakeable evidences, indeed, of deep thought and feeling, but they are deficient, like too much of the poetry of this time, in directness and simplicity. For readers in general, they can have few charms. They are far too ethereal and metaphysical, and they are by no means so alive with passion as might have been anticipated from a knowledge of the author's temperament. Neither do they exhibit much richness of fancy, or remarkable skill in versification. We doubt if they will live—even with the help of, or in connection with, the father's name. They are more likely to please deep thinkers and professional critics than the ordinary reader; but no poetry seems destined to live that is wholly wanting in the elements of popularity. Metaphysics in prose may force their way, but not metaphysics in verse. Hartley Coleridge was a sort of Tennyson, but with far less fancy and feeling, and these are the qualities which popularize the poetry of our new Laureate in spite of much transcendentalism and remote allusion and affectation and bad taste.

It is but fair to state that almost all the English critics seem to rate the performances of Hartley Coleridge far more highly than we do. Let the reader, therefore, make what allowances he may think fit, for the probability of our judgment being a wrong one. *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, which usually contains sensible and able papers, observes, that "he (Hartley Coleridge) always spoke of himself as 'one of the small poets,' and it is probably true that the loftiest functions of poetry, which no man could better understand and describe, were beyond his reach." This means, we suppose, that he could not have written "Paradise Lost," or the tragedy of "Macbeth." "But," continues the critic, "his style, both of thought and expression, is decidedly large and grand: and in short pieces of every kind—whether bursts of emotion or embodiments of ideal conception, or broodings of sentiment, he may rank almost with the greatest." This is idle exaggeration. There is very slight chance indeed, that in "bursts of emotion," posterity will rank Hartley Coleridge with Burns, or in "broodings of sentiment" with Wordsworth, or in "ideal embodiments" with his own father—to say nothing of the "greatest" poets—Chaucer, and Spenser, and Shakespeare, and Milton. But let us turn to one of the

proofs, adduced by *Tait*, of the correctness of his own critical laudation.

“ Could Dryden,” he asks triumphantly, “ have *opened* a poem in a greater style than this ? ”

“ Oh for a man, I care not what he be,
A lord or labourer, so his soul be free,
Who had one spark of that celestial fire
That did the Prophets of old time inspire,
When Joel made the mystic trumpet cry,
When Jeremiah raised his voice on high,
And rapt Isaiah felt his great heart swell
With all the sins and woes of Israel !
Not such am I—a petty man of rhyme,
Nursed in the softness of a female time.”

Now let the reader compare this great “ *opening* ” with one of Dryden’s “ *openings* ” ;—here is the commencement of the *Religio Laici*.

“ Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,
Is reason to the soul : and as on high,
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
Not light us here ; so reason’s glimmering ray
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
But guide us upward to a better day.
And as those nightly tapers disappear
When day’s bright lord ascends our hemisphere,
So pale grows reason at Religion’s sight ;
So dies and so dissolves in supernatural light.”

We shall not insult the reader’s discrimination by pointing out the immeasurable superiority of the magnificent lines of glorious old John over those of Hartley. It is a cruel kindness to overpraise a poet in this style.

We repeat that the poems of Hartley Coleridge with all their deficiencies are the productions of true genius ; nor must we forget to say that with all his errors as a man, he had a heart that was full to overflowing with some of the most lovable of Christian virtues. He had that guileless and winning simplicity of character which is so often the accompaniment of intellectual gifts, and he never injured any one but himself. His most intimate associates, amongst whom were the illiterate and the learned, the vulgar and the refined, all dearly loved him, and acknowledged not only that he had many admirable qualities but that even most of his failings “ leant to virtue’s side.”

TO A LADY ON HER BIRTH-DAY.

I WILL not hail thy natal day
 With custom's cold unmeaning words ;
 The hopes and fears that haunt thy way
 My fond heart silently records.

I will not wish its glad return,
 With lifted bowl and hacknied phrase ;
 Thy breast for better meed would yearn
 Than idle forms and fulsome praise.

Thou knowest that in my secret soul
 Thine hallowed image, aye must dwell ;
 And faithful passion's strong controul
 In vain the feeble tongue would tell.

If then amidst the formal crowd
 I fail to breathe the formal prayer,
 A fervid love more deep than loud
 Thine heart will not disdain to share.

When thou no more deceit canst brook,
 And fain the lines of truth wouldst trace,
 Dear Lady ! watch thy lover's look,
 And read the language of his face !

 SONNET.

OUR paths are desolate, and far apart—
 Our early dreams have vanished ;—never more
 May we together mingle as before,
 Our fond, impassioned spirits. Quick tears start
 As eager memories rush upon my heart,
 And rend oblivion's veil. E'en now the store
 Of star-like spells that softly glimmered o'er
 The twilight maze of youth, a moment dart
 Their clouded beams on Care's reverted eye.
 Alas ! the promise of the past hath been
 A brief though dear delusion:—all things fly
 My onward way, and mock the lengthening scene,—
 Through Life's dim mist thy form oft seemeth nigh,
 Though lone and distant as the Night's fair Queen

BIRTH-DAY STANZAS TO MY CHILD.

I.

My spirit revels deep in dreams to-day ;
 I dimly recognize the scenes around ;
 For though thy fairy form is far away,
 And still thy father treads this foreign ground,
 He sees thee in thy native fields at play,
 And hears thy light laugh's sweet familiar sound,
 Merry and musical as birds in May !

II.

This is thy natal morn—a date how dear !
 How many tender memories mark the time !
 How oft thy prattle charmed a parent's ear,
 And soothed his soul in this ungenial clime !
 How oft, when impious discontent was near,
 Thy sinless smile hath kindled hopes sublime,
 And made the gloom exile seem less drear !

III.

Though now in weary loneliness I learn
 What countless miseries broken ties may bring,
 Though vainly to deserted rooms I turn
 For one domestic charm, I will not fling
 A shade upon this hour, nor idly yearn
 For pleasures passed on Time's too rapid wing ;
 Nor pine at Fate's decrees, however stern.

IV.

Dear Child ! to thee devoted is the day,
 Thy brethren, (gentle twins,) and she who bears
 A mother's sacred name are proud and gay ;
 The small white English cottage sweetly wears
 A festal look, while friends and kindred pay
 Their tribute-praise, foretell thy future years,
 And paint the brightness of thine onward way.

V.

And when the cheerful feast is nearly o'er,
 The wine-cup shall be filled, and thy dear name
 Be fondly pledged each elder guest's before,
 Regardful of the time ; a pleasing shame
 Shall flush thy cheek ; and then the brilliant store
 Of birth-day gifts shall childhood's dreams inflame,
 While aged hearts remember days of yore.

VI.

And yet 'mid all this mirthfulness and pride,
 The sudden tears shall dim thy mother's eye,
 And thou, sweet boy, shalt sadly cast aside
 Thy glittering gauds, and stand in silence by,
 While prayers are breathed for him by fate denied
 On England's happy shores to live or die,
 Or cross again the severing waters wide.

VII.

But this blest day no cares shall shade my heart,
 Save such as pass like clouds o'er summer skies ;
 As once thy presence bade despair depart,
 So now before thy memory sorrow flies ;
 And almost momentarily around me start
 Dear forms of home, that wake a sweet surprise,
 Like visions raised by some enchanter's art !

Calcutta, Oct. 19, 1831.

SOLITUDE.

I.

I WAKE from dreams of pleasures past,
 That came from slumber's mystic land ;—
 Their light yet lingers—like the last
 Sweet flush of glory, warm and bland,
 When sinks the sun behind the hill,
 Yet leaves his pathway brightened still.

II.

But as black night a shadow flings
 O'er lingering daylight's latest gleam,
 So raven care with ebony wings
 Eclipseth each diviner dream,
 Till earth appears a temple lone,
 The lights all quenched, the guests all gone.

III.

I sigh for some familiar face,
 I sigh for tones that grief controul,
 I mourn the solitude of place
 But more the solitude of soul ;
 For when love lighteth not the gloom
 The lone heart liveth in a tomb !

ON PHYSIOGNOMY.

The lineaments of the body will discover those natural inclinations of the mind which dissimulation will conceal or discipline will suppress.

Lord Bacon.

I knew by his face there was something in him.

Shakespeare.

I am so apt to frame a notion of every man's humour or circumstances by his looks, that I have sometimes employed myself from Charing-cross to the Royal Exchange in drawing the characters of those who have past by me. When I see a man with a sour ravelled face, I cannot forbear pitying his wife, and when I meet with an open ingenuous countenance, think on the happiness of his friends, his family and relations.

Addison.

PHYSIOGNOMY is a science which most people smile at, and which all practise. It is more easily ridiculed than abandoned. The old and the young, the wise and the foolish, the shrewd and the simple, the suspicious and the confiding, all trust more or less, either for good or for evil, to the outward and visible signs of the internal spirit. The philosophical testimonies in favor of this science are sufficiently respectable both in character and number. In the olden time the sages of Egypt and of India cultivated it with enthusiasm, and it is supposed that it was from those countries that Pythagoras introduced it into Greece.

Aristotle treated largely of the Physiognomy, not only of man, but of the brute creation. After his time many Greek authors wrote treatises upon the subject, of which a collection was formed, and published in 1780. Like Medicine and Astrology it was for a long time associated with divination, and they who followed it as a profession, did not confine their scrutiny to the mental character of the countenance, but endeavoured to trace in its lineaments the destiny of the individual, as the fortune-teller of the present day peruses the lines of the hand. It subsequently fell into temporary disrepute.

It was about the commencement of the eighteenth century that the science was revived. Several treatises on the subject were then published, both in England and on the Continent, by able and learned men; but Lavater was the first writer of eminence in modern times who made it fashionable and popular. His work on the subject was got up in so splendid a style, and with such numerous illustrative engravings, and the author himself was so much esteemed for his many personal virtues, that though he was opposed by a few of the critics of the day, he speedily obtained a large body of disciples, and his writings were translated into various

languages. A man more truly pious, or more candid and benevolent, the world has rarely known. His character would suffer nothing by a comparison even with that of Fenelon, whom he in many respects resembled. He was not a profound philosopher, but that he was a man of genius no one can have a moment's doubt who has read his celebrated work on Physiognomy, and the autobiographical notices of his early life. It is true that the former is often much too fanciful. It is also too verbose and desultory, and abounds in useless repetitions. These defects must be at once admitted; but they are redeemed by so many acute and ingenious observations, by so many noble sentiments, and by such a pervading spirit of philanthropy and religion, that the author's enthusiasm is almost irresistibly contagious. Though his ardour in the illustration of his favorite science beguiles him occasionally into very untenable positions, and leads him to speak somewhat too decidedly upon points that are purely speculative, his frank acknowledgments of error, and the curious avowal, more than once repeated, that he knows little or nothing of the subject, notwithstanding his long study and experience, disarm the anger of the reader, and prepare him to make a liberal allowance for every imperfection.

Lavater introduced the study of *osseal* physiognomy. All preceding authors confined themselves chiefly to a consideration of what has been called *pathognomy*, which includes only those moveable or accidental or transient appearances in the muscles or soft parts of the human face which betray the vicissitudes of feeling and of thought, while they neglected those permanent outlines which indicate the general and fixed character of the heart and mind. He was not only a physiognomist in the ordinary and limited sense of the term, but as much of a *craniologist* as Gall or Spurzheim, though he did not pretend to the same degree of preternatural knowledge; nor attempt, as they did, to divide the mind into distinct and opposite faculties, and assign them their several little bumps or cells.

Lavater advises the student to place a collection of skulls or casts of heads of celebrated or well known persons in one horizontal row. After comparing these skulls or casts carefully with each other, and each with the intellectual or moral character of the individual, the student may proceed to the consideration of the external conformation of unknown persons. He who after comparing the heads of men of various degrees of mental power, can remain of opinion that there is no difference between the skulls of the highest and lowest order of intellect, or in other words that mind leaves no fixed and

legible traces upon matter, whether bone or flesh, must have a cranium of his own that would be a puzzle to the phrenologist, were it to indicate any portion of intelligence beyond the merest instinct. Perhaps there is no instance in the whole history of human greatness of a man of magnificent genius with a head of which the frontal portion was at once both low and narrow. We occasionally indeed meet with persons of considerable capacity whose foreheads may exhibit either the one or other of these defects ; but never both : and the defect is invariably redeemed by the opposite advantage of height or breadth. But though genius refuses to reside in a forehead at once both low and narrow, it is not every high or broad one that is honored by its presence. A large forehead is not always intellectual. Its peculiarity of shape and inclination is of great importance. If it either falls too far back from the face or too much overhangs it, though in other respects of fair proportions, it is indicative of mental imbecility, and approaches too nearly in character to the heads of animals. The old Grecian artists had so strong an impression of the unintellectual aspect of a violently retreating forehead, that in their anxiety to avoid it in their ideal portraits, they almost ran into the opposite extreme ; and though they never allowed it to bulge out and overhang the lower features, they made it *nearly* perpendicular, which in the living subject denotes dulness and incapacity. The forehead of an idiot generally either hangs clumsily, like a projecting rock, over a wild and dreary face, or falls directly back, as we find it in the lower animals.

It is very rarely that we find amongst those who deny the truth of Physiognomy, a man of much acuteness or reflection. The few reasonable persons who are met with in the ranks of its opponents are generally influenced more by a mistrust of their own physiognomical discernment, or an apprehension of the mischief and injustice which follow erroneous judgments, than by any serious conviction that the mind is not generally stamped upon the features. To those who object to the science on the ground of its uncertainty, as regards human skill, there are two answers. In the first place truth itself is not to be rejected or denied, because its followers are occasionally at fault : and in the second, let us reason as cautiously and coldly as we may, we can never wholly resist the impressions which we receive from the perusal of a human face.

There is no science, however useful or important, the professors of which have not fallen into egregious errors. It is not less unreasonable to reject Physiognomy because the physiognomist is occasionally mistaken, than it would be to reject

theology, medicine, and even mathematics on similar grounds. The teachers and students are alike liable to error in them all. Science is fixed, but man is fallible. Lavater acknowledges his repeated blunders, without supposing that his own mistakes form an argument against the truth of his favorite science; but Gall and Spurzheim seem to think themselves as infallible as the Pope, and have so completely identified themselves with the science which they teach, that to confess an error, however slight, in their minutest details or their wildest speculations, would be tantamount to an admission that all the broad principles of phrenology, are like the baseless fabric of a vision. In a lecture delivered by the latter at Liverpool in May 1822, he said that if but one tender and affectionate mother could be proved to be deficient in the organ of philoprogenitiveness or the love of children (a bump at the back of the head), or not have it strongly developed, he would give up Phrenology at once! A decision of this nature is equally unphilosophical and presumptuous. It is like the dogmatism of a religious enthusiast, who stakes the cause of Christianity on the accuracy of his own interpretation.

According to the good old King Duncan,

There is no art
To find the mind's construction in the face.

The King's mistake in a solitary case is no argument against the truth of physiognomy, though he himself seems to think so. But

Seldom, alas! the power of logic reigns
With much sufficiency in Royal brains.

But though not in general, perhaps, very sound logicians, Kings, like beggars, are for the most part practised and accurate readers of the "human face divine." Shakespeare does not mean to under-rate the science or art of physiognomy in the speech of Duncan, who did not after all make quite so complete a mistake as he thought he did, in the character of the Thane of Caudor, whom there is no reason to regard as naturally and habitually treacherous. Quite the reverse. His original nature was noble. His repentance was profound, his confessions frank, his death magnanimous.

He died
As one that had been studied in his death,
To throw away the dearest thing he owed
As 'twere a careless trifle.

Shakespeare makes another character observe very naturally — "I knew by his face there was something in him;" and

Lady Macbeth significantly cautions her lord against rendering his countenance too legible.

Your face, my Thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters.

A profound study of Physiognomy would, perhaps, enable us to trace the origin of our ideas of beauty. It is a problem that has exercised many subtle intellects. It is perhaps not a quality of matter. The face, *per se*, may possibly have no more relation to beauty or ugliness than a lamp or transparent vase that betrays the light or colour from within. Beauty is a moral or intellectual quality shining through material forms. Those forms are the most pleasing to the eye which are commonly the medium of the moral or mental quality that we most admire. Mr. Burke, with all his ingenuity and acuteness, seems to have been more successful in showing what beauty is not, than what it is. I cannot adopt his vague and unsatisfactory definition. "It is for the greater part," he says, "some quality in bodies acting mechanically upon the human mind by the intervention of the senses." Some late writers on the subject, among whom are Mr. Alison and Mr. Jeffrey, suppose that in reality no one form of matter is more beautiful than another, and that all our ideas of beauty are the result of habit and association. This theory has often been opposed with considerable ingenuity. Mr. Hazlitt, in his little essay on the subject, though he does not define what beauty is, endeavours to show that it is in some way inherent in the object.

To the argument that beauty is a mere quality of mind, it may perhaps be objected that there are certain material objects, unconnected with life or spirit, such as a flower or a shell, which are admired as soon as seen. But even in new and inanimate objects, the mind invariably discovers some kind of analogy, however slight or remote, with its own nature. The analogy is not the less decisive, because it is sometimes a secret and almost unconscious process. It is in this way that poets breathe life and passion into all eternal things, and sympathize with their own creations. The more imagination we possess, the deeper is our sense of beauty. The Medicean Venus, that excites some men to an ecstasy of admiration, is regarded by others whose corporeal vision is in no degree inferior, with absolute indifference. Smollet thought contemptuously of it. The effect depends greatly upon the mind of the observer. Persons of exquisite delicacy of taste and feeling recognize traits of a congenial spirit in the smooth elegance and the flowing outlines of a feminine face and figure.

We must be capable of conceiving and of sympathizing with a fine internal spirit, before its outward symbols can awaken a genuine enthusiasm. On this account no man who has not some touch of gentleness or nobility in his own nature can study the science of Physiognomy with complete success. He might quickly discover his own crimes or weaknesses in the faces of kindred characters, but the signs of a higher spirit would escape his penetration, or present a tacit reproof of his own self-esteem, that would render him quite unable to peruse them with an impartial judgment. There is a great deal of truth in the common saying, that a person has generally the good or ill qualities which he attributes to mankind. If Swift had written a work on Physiognomy, it would have been very different from that of Lavater. The more the latter studied the countenances of men, the higher became his opinion of our internal nature. But the cold, the stern, the suspicious and sarcastic English satirist would have found nothing amiable or glorious in the "human face divine." He only who unites in himself the rarely connected qualities of an enlarged and liberal mind with a capacity for minute observation, and a knowledge of the world with a pure and gentle heart, can hope to attain an equal facility in tracing the signs of vice or virtue.

The opponents of Physiognomy found their chief objections on isolated facts and accidental circumstances. They are people who have a strange prejudice against all broad principles and general rules. With them a slight mistake, even in the language of a proposition, decides its fate. They rejoice at a flaw in the indictment. Thus if they happen for once in their lives to meet with an honest face on the shoulders of a rogue, or to have discovered a professed physiognomist in error, or to have proved their own want of physiognomical discernment by some still greater blunder, we are gravely assured that appearances are deceitful, and are called upon to believe that the soul of man is never legible in his face. They conclude that the aspect of humanity is a continual lie, because they have in some instances failed to read it rightly, or because certain individuals by a cunning mis-use of their features, and others by some accident in life or some unkindly freak of nature, form exceptions to the ordinary correspondence between mind and matter. Physiognomy is a science which can never admit of mathematical precision. But entirely to reject it on that account is illogical and absurd. The physician's art is equally uncertain. The full and blooming cheek is a sign of health and strength, and the pale and thin one of sickness and debility. The physician is guided by these tokens. Should they some-

times happen to deceive him, (such occurrences being comparatively rare) he does not the less regard them in other cases as symbolical of the internal condition of the system. He acts upon his general experience. If amongst a thousand apples, of a fresh and rosy look, there should be five or six that are rotten at the core, it would be ridiculous and childish to dispute, on account of these exceptions, the general assertion, that the quality of fruit is indicated by its appearance.

Notwithstanding our occasional mistakes and disappointments, the human face is still like a book of reference which we perpetually consult. We study the features of a stranger before we admit him to our confidence. We decide upon his character at a single glance, and with infinitely more truth and precision than we could arrive at by a more lengthened and laborious process. Looks are more legible than words, and far less deceitful. We can better command our phrases than our features, though the former are by no means so expressive of the movements of the soul. Even deeds are more equivocal than looks, because the motives which give them their real character are often too deeply shrouded in the heart to be discovered by the world.

Our first impressions are commonly truest. The general character of the face, and the peculiar expression which is stamped upon the features by the thoughts and feelings of many years, flash into our minds with more force and clearness when we meet them as a novelty than when they become more familiar. Thus the first view of a landscape or a city impresses the real effect more vividly on the fancy than any subsequent or deliberate observation.

We cannot easily conquer the feeling of repugnance which is sometimes excited by the countenance of a stranger. Neither can we always explain the cause, even to ourselves.

I do not like thee, Doctor Fell ;
The reason why I cannot tell.

Even when subsequent familiarity, an exchange of kind offices, and a strong desire to shake off an apparently ungenerous prejudice, suppress for a time all harsh and unfriendly thoughts, some accidental exposure of character, either in word, deed, or look, is almost sure to confirm our first impression. There is a curious passage in Gessner's *Life of Lavater*, that may serve as an illustration. I quote the translation by Thomas Holcroft:*

“A person to whom he was an entire stranger was once announced, and

* The son of this well-known writer, Villiers Holcroft, died in Calcutta a few years ago. He lived and died neglected. His death, I believe, was not even announced in the newspaper obituaries.

introduced to him as a visitor. The first idea that rose in his mind, the moment he saw him, was—'This man is a murderer.'—He however suppressed the thought as unjustifiably severe and hasty, and conversed with the person with his accustomed civility. The cultivated understanding, extensive information, and ease of manner which he discovered in his visitor, inspired him with the highest respect for his intellectual endowments; and his esteem for these, added to the benevolence and candour natural to him, induced him to disregard the unfavourable impression he had received from his first appearance with respect to his moral character. The next day he dined with him by invitation; but soon after it was known that this accomplished gentleman was one of the assassins of the late king of Sweden; and he found it advisable to leave the country as speedily as possible."

Rousseau somewhere speaks of a man in whose countenance he traced certain obscure and mysterious indications of an evil character, and he accordingly resolved to avoid him quietly while there was yet peace between them; for he felt, he knew not why, that it could not long continue. Every man has experienced from repulsive features the same strong but undefinable impressions. Rousseau, however, often fell into great mistakes, for his fancy outran his observation. He was far too whimsical and distrustful to make a just and accurate physiognomist. In the account of the controversy between him and Hume, there is a curious and characteristic instance of his too fanciful interpretation of the face. It is given in Rousseau's own words:—

"As we were sitting one evening, after supper, silent by the fire-side, I caught his (Hume's) eyes intently fixed on mine, as indeed happened very often: and that in a manner of which it is very difficult to give an idea. At that time he gave me a steadfast, piercing look, mixed with a sneer which greatly disturbed me. 'To get rid of the embarrassment I lay under, I endeavoured to look full at him in my turn; but in fixing my eyes against his I felt the most inexpressible terror, and was obliged soon to turn them away. The speech and physiognomy of the good David is that of an honest man; but where, great God! did this good man borrow those eyes he fixes so sternly and unaccountably on those of his friends?"

The impression of this look remained with me, and gave me much uneasiness. My trouble increased even to a degree of fainting; and if I had not been relieved by an effusion of tears, I had been suffocated. Presently after this I was seized with the most violent remorse; I even despised myself; till at length, in a transport which I still remember with delight, I sprang on his neck, embraced him eagerly; while almost choked with sobbing, and bathed in tears, I cried out, in broken accents, *No, no, David Hume cannot be treacherous. If he be not the best of men, he must be the basest of mankind.* David Hume politely returned my embraces, and, gently tapping me on the back, repeated several times, in a good-natured and easy tone, *Why, what, my dear Sir! Nay, my dear Sir! Oh, my dear Sir!* He said nothing more. I felt my heart yearn within me. We went to bed; and I set out the next day for the country."

Hume answers all this by explaining, that like most studious men, he was subject to reveries and fits of absence, in which he sometimes had a fixed look or stare. A cool and sober physiognomist could not have made so ridiculous a mistake as that of Rousseau.

Thomas Moore has a poetical fling at physiognomy:—

"In vain we fondly strive to trace
The soul's reflection in the face ;

In vain we dwell on lines and crosses,
 Crooked mouths, or short proboscis :
 Boobies have looked as wise and bright
 As Plato or the Stagyrite ;
 And many a sage and learned skull
 Has peeped through windows dark and dull."

This may be wit, but it is not philosophy. I have answered its *logic* by anticipation, in noticing the ordinary objections. He has even Holy Writ against him. "Wisdom maketh the countenance bright."* Spenser was not only a greater poet, but a better philosopher than Moore, and saw the strict analogy between the mind and body.

"For of the soul the body form doth take."

Spenser.

Has nature bestowed upon man such an admirable mechanism of features for no useful end? The purport of outward expression is to show what passes in the mind, and as we have already said, it is far more true than words. Speech, it has been wittily observed, was given to man to conceal his thoughts. But looks cannot often deceive the most inexperienced of mankind. All children have skill in physiognomy. It is our mother-tongue. We understand it in our cradles. It is universal. Even animals can read it in the faces of their kind, and sometimes in that of men. It is wonderful with what precision we peruse the countenances of those on whom our hopes and happiness depend. Thus boys at school exhibit a remarkable quickness in discovering the mood of their master in the condition of his features—

"Well do the boding tremblers learn to trace
 The day's disasters in his morning face."

"There is surely," says Sir Thomas Browne, "a physiognomy which master-mendicants observe; whereby they instantly discover a merciful aspect, and will single out a face wherein they spy the signatures and marks of mercy; for there are mystically in our faces certain characters, which carry in them the motto of our souls, wherein he that can read A, B, C, may read our natures." Lavater describes a particular kind of nose which in his opinion is of more worth than a kingdom. This is somewhat too extravagant, but the value of an honest and noble face can hardly be over-rated. Montaigne says, that on the mere credit of his open aspect, persons who had no other knowledge of his character had the most implicit confidence in his honour. He gives some curi-

* Lavater also gives Scriptural authority for the truth of physiognomy, and makes the following quotation:—"A man may be known by his look, and one that has understanding by his countenance, when thou meetest him."

ous illustrations of this fact. Even Moore, whose versified attack on physiognomy we have just quoted, has shown his just appreciation of beauty of person as associated with beauty of mind, and has on all occasions connected certain internal qualities with certain exterior marks in the persons of his heroes and his heroines. The veiled Prophet of Khorassan has a visage in keeping with his hideous soul, and the light of the haram, the young Nourmahal, is blessed with a set of features and a figure that are worthy of an angel.

“ While her laugh, full of life, without any controul,
But the sweet one of gracefulness, rung from her soul ;
And where it most sparkled no glance could discover,
In lip, cheek, or eyes, for it brightened all over,—
Like any fair lake that the breeze is upon
When it breaks into dimples and laughs in the sun !”

For this exquisite description the poet may be forgiven the obnoxious passage about physiognomy. It would redeem a darker sin. If any man were to find a face like that of Nourmahal's concealing a cold and diabolical character, he might have some shadow of a reason to deny that there is a correspondence between the features and the soul, though even in such a case the shock that the discovery would occasion would be a sufficient proof that anomalies of this nature are extremely rare and strikingly at variance with our general experience. Lavater lays great stress on the very unequivocal and decisive character of a laugh. If it be free and hearty, and occasion a general and light movement in all the features, and dimple the cheek and chin, it is an almost infallible evidence of the absence of any great natural wickedness of disposition. In judging of the character from the countenance, it is of great importance to observe which emotions are most happily expressed. The frequency of a smile is not so true a sign of gentleness and good humour as its facility.

In considering the truth or falsehood of the general proposition that the body corresponds with the soul, we may fairly illustrate it by extreme cases. No man for instance connects in his own mind corporeal deformity with a perfect beauty of soul. As we cannot conceive pure unembodied spirit, we give it a fleshly but most glorious external. An angel with a “forehead villainous low” and a flat or a pug nose, is a contradiction, which neither reason nor fancy can wholly reconcile. We derive this impression of the fitness of things from nature herself, who reveals the harmony of the mysterious system which connects the flesh and the spirit of all mortal beings. Occasional and slight deviations from the general rule do not shake the faith of philosophic minds. Even admitting (but only, however, for the sake of the argument)

that some of the most amiable and intellectual men have had the faces of villains and of idiots ; what does it prove ? Such exceptions are not more remarkable than the occasional monstrous births of men and brutes. Because some individuals have been born with two heads or a hairy hide, it is not the less a law of nature that mankind have only one head a piece, and smooth uncovered skins.

The majestic external confirmation of the greatest poets and philosophers, both of ancient and modern times, is a strong evidence in favour of physiognomy. The heads of these men are all more or less indicative of their mental character. Montaigne, indeed, laments the ugliness of Socrates, and repeats the well-known anecdote of the physiognomical judgment passed on him by Zopyrus, that he was "stupid, brutal, sensual and addicted to drunkenness." With respect to the original *moral* qualities of the philosopher, the decision was not erroneous, for Socrates himself admitted that his virtues were a hard-gained triumph over his natural disposition. But the philosopher's forehead was a fitting tabernacle for a lofty mind. No craniologist would have doubted his intellectual power. The skill of Zopyrus was confined to the perusal of the lower features.

How delightful is the study of the human head ! It is a mystery and a glory ! It at once perplexes the reason and kindles the imagination ! What a wondrous treasury of knowledge—what a vast world of thought is contained within its ivory wall ! In that small citadel of the soul what a host of mighty and immortal images are ranged uncrowded ! What floods of external light and what an endless variety of sounds are admitted to the busy world within, through those small but beautiful apertures, the eye and the ear ! Those delicately pencilled arches that hang their lines of loveliness above the mental heaven, are more full of grace and glory than the rainbow ! Those blue windows of the mind expose a sight more lovely and profound than the azure depths of the sea or sky ! Those rosy portals that give entrance to the invisible Spirit of Life, and whence issue those "winged words" that steal into the lover's heart or the sage's mind, or fly to the uttermost corners of the earth and live for ever, surpass in beauty the orient cloud-gates of the dawn ! To trace in such exquisite outworks the state of the interior is an occupation almost worthy of a god !

THE PAST YEAR.

DEPARTED Year ! now sunk to rest
 On dark oblivion's dreamless breast ;—
 Lost offspring of mysterious Time !
 What mortal crowds of every clime,
 In youth and infancy and age
 That 'compained thy pilgrimage,
 With thee beyond the limits lie
 That mock the keenest human eye !
 What eager thoughts and golden schemes,
 And prospects fair and flattering dreams
 Vanished before the morning light
 That scared thy latest living night !
 What change of actors and of scene
 Within thy narrow span hath been !
 And yet though brief thy path, too long
 It seemed to those in Life's wild throng,
 Who looked towards thy closed career
 With hopes now withered on thy bier !

NIGHT.

WHEN gentle Twilight floateth o'er the scene
 On cloudy car, and with the glare of day
 The busy mind's bright chaos melts away,
 What tender images and thoughts serene
 Steal forth like stars ! And when Night's darker screen
 Divides us from the world, our mortal clay
 Off-drops at Fancy's touch ;—earth-freed we stray
 To realms more wild than haunted forests green
 Where fairies love to wander. But the time,
 Though hallowed with alternate light and shade
 Of vision fair or solemn trance sublime,
 Or memories sweet by distance dream-like made,
 Is brief as precious ;—at the rousing chime
 Of morning birds, all these enchantments fade.

FAME AND LOVE.

I.

I SOUGHT the halls of Fame,
 And raised a suppliant voice,
 But not one sound responsive breathed my name,
 Or bade my soul rejoice !

II.

In comfortless despair
 To find ambition vain,
 I leave forlorn the paths of public care,
 And this low cot regain.

III.

As some remembered scene
 That charmed in sun-lit hours,
 Grows drear and dull when tempests intervene
 With wintry shades and showers ;

IV.

So every form of earth
 Obeys a mental change,
 And things that kindle in the light of mirth,
 In grief, are cold and strange.

V.

Thus wrapt in cheerless gloom,
 My home is home no more,
 The place looks lone, the plants less sweetly bloom,
 And charm not as before.

VI.

How dark the threshold seems,
 How dim the casement flowers,
 How sickly pale the star-like blossom gleams
 O'er these still jasmine bowers !

VII.

A dread foreboding falls
Ice-cold upon my heart,—
Perhaps within these dear domestic walls
Hath fierce Death hurled his dart !

VIII.

But hark ! yon lattice shakes !
A small white hand appears,
And, lo ! the face whose smile of welcome makes
Mine eyes forget their tears !

IX.

The roof with gladness rings—
And quick feet tread the floor—
With joyous shout a rosy cherub flings
Wide back my cottage door !

X.

And oh, how different now
The thoughts that thrill my frame !
I kiss with proud delight each dear one's brow,
And dream no more of fame.

SONNET.

WITH life and mystery all nature teems :—
A solitary leaf—a breath of air—
An inch of common earth—their burdens bear
Of tiny nations. The sun's glory beams
On scenes minute, more strange than strangest dreams,
And never shines unfelt. No spot is bare,
No moment silent. Life is every where ;
And this vast world is busier than it seems.
Oh ! what a proud magnificent abode
Hath Man, the noblest living thing he sees !
Yet Science scans, by light that God bestowed,
A world of other worlds, and haply these
Have groves that ring with holier harmonies,
And beings with sublimer aims endowed.

A MUTINY.

[A FRAGMENT FROM A JOURNAL AT SEA.]

WE not only encountered a furious gale but met something still more appalling than even the strife of the elements. The whole crew, instead of exerting themselves, as usual in the hour of danger, refused at first, in the most insulting manner, to obey the directions of the Captain, until he threatened to put the first man in irons, who should again hesitate to perform his duty. The storm commenced about six o'clock on tuesday evening, and continued until eight or nine the next morning. After the confusion, occasioned by the tempest, had somewhat subsided, the boatswain stole, unobserved, into the Captain's cabin, and informed him that there was a mutiny among the crew, who, being aware that the ship was partly laden with dollars, had resolved, after murdering the captain, the second mate, and all the passengers, male and female, to take the ship to America. The first mate, they had decided, should not be killed until within sight of port, as there was no person amongst the mutineers who could undertake to navigate the ship.

It is customary on board a merchant-ship to have one-half of the crew always on deck. These are relieved at regular intervals by the other half, so that at the time of changing duties, all hands are on deck. On wednesday morning, we received information of the mutiny; and saturday, at midnight, (the hour when those on duty are relieved,) was fixed on for the attack and assassination. If the crew had discovered, or had even suspected our informant, in all probability a horrible death would have been his fate. It was, therefore, necessary to keep our knowledge of the mutiny as long as possible a profound secret, while the boatswain mingled among the seamen as usual, and entered apparently into all their views. He was thus enabled to communicate from time to time every important particular of their plans and proceedings. The ring-leader of the mutineers was a tall athletic fellow, with a most ferocious countenance. This ruffian stirred up the worst passions of the crew by suggestions respecting the treatment of the female passengers. The Captain had his own wife on board, and it would be impossible to describe his horror and indignation at this intelligence. The crew consisted of thirty men; while, exclusive of six females, our whole party were only a third of that number. Of those on our side attached to the ship were the captain, the first and second mates, the boatswain, and the two cabin

servants. Among the passengers were a lieutenant in the Bengal Army, and three cadets. We were all secretly armed, and there were always four or five of us on guard during the whole of wednesday, thursday, and friday nights. On saturday, none of our party felt any inclination for sleep, and we all sat up in the large cabin, with our loaded pistols on the table before us. As there was a great quantity of fire-arms and ammunition in this cabin, it was the design of the mutineers to rush in suddenly, and seize them before we were aware of their intention. Had they succeeded in this manœuvre, their victory would have been secure. As the two servants were stowing away, and concealing the super-abundance of swords and pistols that were hung on the sides and ceiling of the cabin, an accidental noise awoke the Captain's wife, who slept in the adjoining apartment, and overhearing a few ominous words, she guessed at the whole affair. Without any extravagant alarm, she earnestly requested an explanation from her husband; and, after a slight hesitation, he thought proper to comply. She immediately fell on his neck, and with a few tears, said she well knew that if skill or courage could protect our lives, we were safe.

A few minutes before twelve o'clock, concealing their weapons beneath their cloaks, the captain and second mate, the first mate being already on duty, went on deck; the rest of our party remained in the cabin, with the exception of the boatswain, who was stationed as usual at the main-mast, to be ready as the gong in the fore-castle tolled the last stroke of twelve, to pipe all hands on deck. At the first sound of the gong, the men, whose turn it was to be relieved, went speedily forward, as if anxious to get to their berths as soon as the word was given; but, in reality, to join those who were just starting up to their work of murder. It was arranged amongst us that the party remaining in the great cabin should not appear on deck until the first note from the boatswain. Immediately the shrill whistle reached our ears, up we sprang, and ranged ourselves in a line along the front of the quarter-deck. Almost at the same instant the boatswain joined our party, when the whole crew, armed with short knives, rushed desperately towards us, but thunder-struck at observing us prepared to meet them with a row of pistols ready cocked and levelled; they made a sudden stop, and then, one by one, slowly slunk away. At last the captain, in a stern voice, commanded them to return to the foot of the quarter-deck and informed them of his full knowledge of their intentions, but ended with a promise, that if they behaved well during the rest of the voyage, he would take no

further notice of the events of that night. The ring-leader, however, was excepted from this general understanding, and was immediately put in irons. As we were to touch at Trincomalee to land a passenger it was settled that, when we arrived at that port, this heartless ruffian should be delivered over to a King's ship, with a full statement of his crime. This was accordingly done, but as we remained only a few hours at Ceylon, we did not learn the nature of his punishment. After ridding ourselves of this dangerous personage, our crew became extremely tractable, and appeared to be stung with remorse and shame for their former conduct.

INGENIOUS ROGUES AT MADRAS.

[FROM THE SAME JOURNAL.*]

FROM Trincomalee, we had a pleasant and speedy voyage to Madras. The appearance of this Presidency, from the roadstead, is remarkably imposing, on account of the range of large white buildings that are visible from a considerable distance. The shore is strongly marked by a line of tremendous breakers, which even in calm weather are not to be passed without some danger. The boats used for landing passengers here are called Masoolah boats, and are of a peculiar construction : though clumsy in appearance, they are really very light and buoyant. As soon as we had cast anchor, we were much struck with the appearance of a native, who came off from the shore on a mere log of wood which he paddled along with great speed and dexterity. This man was nearly naked, having nothing but a small piece of cloth around his loins. Attached to his neck he had a little oiled silk bag, from which, when he arrived on board, he presented the Captain with a letter from his agent on shore. The log of wood is called a Catamaran, and the man who paddles it, a Catamaran Jack. He is generally as much in, as out of the water ; and at a little distance, being discovered or concealed by the alternate rise and fall of the surrounding waves, he seems more like a marine animal than a human being.

We had scarcely gratified our curiosity with the Catamaran Jack, when a great number of Masoolah boats, crowded with well-dressed natives, were observed making towards us, and we soon heard, what seemed to our unpractised ears, a barbarous confusion of tongues. As soon as the boats reached

* Kept in my early griffinage—on my first voyage to India.

us, they were attached to the ship's sides, and our dark-colored visitors jumped eagerly on board. They were chiefly Dubashes, a tribe of agents, clerks, or secretaries, who both speak and write the English language with tolerable facility. These people have generally well-proportioned limbs, and pleasant features, with remarkably plausible and insinuating manners. They are such consummate rogues, however, that the most eminent London swindlers are comparatively awkward and unsuccessful in their vocation. They are always on the watch for the young Cadets and writers, whom they seem to consider their most easy and legitimate prey. With an air of profound respect, they solicit the honour of transacting "master's business." If it were possible by any human caution, to guard against their treachery, the services of these shrewd and indefatigable people would be extremely valuable. They act as interpreters and guides, and manage all your affairs with extraordinary acuteness and expedition. After a few prudent hints from the Captain, I engaged one of these clever gentry to accompany me on shore. As I had very little clean linen remaining after my long voyage, I thought it advisable to get as much washed as was possible within two days, the proposed duration of our stay at Madras. On consulting the Dubash, he assured me that I might have as much linen washed in that time as would last me a twelve-month. I accordingly made him place in his boat an immense bag full of clothes, which had been previously counted, and then followed him myself. Though the boat rolled so heavily, that he was scarcely able to stand, my most humble and devoted servant refused to be seated in my presence. When we came to the breakers along the beach, we were buffeted about in such a furious manner, that one of the boatmen, by a sudden jerk, was thrown into the sea. He soon, however, scrambled to the shore, and assisted us to land. The first proceeding of my native friend was to hand over the bag of linen to two persons who seemed to have been waiting his return. They were hurrying off with their prize forthwith, when I took the liberty of assuring the Dubash that I had a disinclination to part with my property with so little ceremony. He affected to be extremely hurt at my suspicions, and agreed that the bag should accompany me wherever I pleased. He then hired a palanquin, which I succeeded in entering in the usual mode after a little explanation, and attended by himself and the bag-carriers, I soon arrived at a large hotel. As the Dubash seemed to be pretty well known at this house, after a little hesitation, I parted with my linen. In the course of the day I strolled about the town without a palanquin or chattah, and observed that

the inhabitants seemed to recognize me as a stranger and a *griff* and smiled at my thus walking the streets ; a practice never followed by respectable Europeans, who have been any time in India. I did not find the heat so oppressive as I expected ; and, indeed, for some time strangers are seldom seriously inconvenienced by the climate. The town of Madras is full of noble houses, except that part of it which is devoted to the natives, and called the Black Town, which is nothing but a cluster of mud huts. I shall not attempt a particular description of this Presidency, chiefly because my stay was too brief to leave any strong impression on my mind.

On the evening of the day after our arrival, it was necessary to return to the ship, and on enquiring of the Dubash, if the clothes were ready, he assured me that the two washermen were waiting with them on the shore. When I arrived there, I found them in the act of placing the bag in the boat, which had been engaged for me. They gave the bill to the Dubash, who paid it, as he had paid all my other expences ; and after informing me of the amount, he put the paper into the fold of his turban. When we reached the ship, she was just under weigh, and all was hurry and confusion. The Dubash then presented me with his bill. It was a bare enumeration of the various sums paid on my account, without any demand for his own personal attendance. When I desired him to say what was due to him, he repeated his assertion, that he served me from feelings of respect, and that he should be quite satisfied if I acknowledged that he had been of any use to me. As there was no time to lose, I gave him immediately what I considered a fair remuneration, and after a profound salaam, he wished me a pleasant voyage, and proceeded to his boat.

About half an hour after the Dubash had left me, it struck me as a rather suspicious circumstance, that he should have detained me on shore until the very last moment, by a piece of false information relative to the time of the Captain's embarkation ; and that the clothes should also have been delayed until there was no opportunity of examining them. Though, of course, it was then too late to remedy any mischief, I went below and counted the contents of the bag. To my great satisfaction, I found them right, as far as mere arithmetic was concerned ; but as to their appearance, I had no means of judging, as it was just in the dusk of the evening, and the cabins were very dark. My feet being wet from the spray on the beach, I determined to change my stockings. Pair after pair split into shreds at the first pull. All the clothes had been changed. For my bran

new stock of fine linen I had got something like the refuse of a second-hand clothes' shop. The shirts at a single shake went into shreds like a rotten sail in a squall. Few of my fellow passengers, however, could afford to laugh at me, griffin as I was. They had almost all been tricked in some way or other. Some had received back no clothes at all, as the Dubashes had carried them off and made themselves scarce when their company was most desired. Others found, that after supplying these fellows with money to settle bills at the hotel, the rascals decamped and left master to pay twice for the same conveniences.

OLD AGE

I.

I BEAR upon this aged head
The flakes of human snow ;
Spring—Summer—Autumn all are fled,
And Winter too must go—
And then this warm blood will be cold,
This living frame be senseless mould.

II.

Yet but for thy strong marking hand,
Thine iron tongue, oh Time !
So fresh is life, its air so bland,
'Twould seem but in its prime.
I think it is not time to die,
Though thou dost give that thought the lie.

III.

With lighter load of years than mine
Alas ! how many a comrade brave
When all around him seemed to shine
Hath sunk before me in the grave ;
The young, the strong, the gay have gone,
While I, lone journeying, linger on.

IV.

Each warning darkened but an hour,
So soon the thought of death can cease !
Nor thank I, as I ought, the Power
That granteth me this lengthened lease ;
But yearn for longer :—gracious Heaven
Can hearts ungrateful be forgiven ?

THE THREE SONS.*

CLOSE on the green marge of a lonely river
 Fed by the mountain torrent heard afar
 At hush of eve, a small white human nest,
 Half-buried in a wilderness of bowers,
 And but with broken sun-beams thinly specked,
 'Neath Summer's brightest sky, like a faint light
 Piercing the gloom umbrageous, glimmereth pale,
 And on the cold wave's tremulous mirror throws
 A dream-like shadow dim. That silent shed
 As kindred to the sylvan landscape seems
 As the green covert where the timid deer
 Slumbers at noon, or clover-covered cell
 Where wearied e'en of sunshine and of song
 The skylark folds his wing. Its aspect wild
 Would charm a hermit's soul, and scarce recalls
 When the chance wanderer breaks the solitude
 A dream of social life ! There MAGDALINE,
 Fled from the false world's glare, unsuited ever
 To grief's dark night, as radiance to the tomb,
 Her lone and widowed heart no longer stirred
 With one sweet joy domestic, day by day,
 Beneath its ivied porch, broods mournfully
 O'er happier hours departed. Oft she sighs
 To think how heavily and slow must fall
 Her last few sands of life. Though three fair youths
 Are mirrored still in her maternal breast,
 These all are far away ? In foreign lands
 They seek what fate denied them in their own.

But life is fraught with change ;—the stillest pool
 Is sometimes ruffled by the gentle play
 Of wandering zephyrs wild. So fortune's breath
 May stir the sullen waters of despair,
 Till the dull surface dimple into smiles !
 Though hope was shrouded like a Lapland sun,
 And day seemed gone from earth, the mourner's soul
 At last was touched with light ! One summer's eve,
 Late lingering on her long-accustomed seat
 Beneath the shaded threshold, tranquil thoughts,
 Accordant with the landscape and the time,
 Fell on her withering heart like holy dew ;

* Suggested by a German Story

For Nature's tenderest influence benign
 To that soft mood was ministrant. The scene
 Might well have calmed a spirit ruder far,
 And soothed less gentle sorrow. Fleecy clouds
 Like white robed phantoms fair, in radiant ranks
 Close thronged the vault of heaven, whose azure tints
 Gleamed out between like blue meandering veins
 Of delicate marble. Fitfully the moon
 Her beauty veiled, then gliding proudly forth
 Again her glorious countenance revealed
 To charm a subject world !

At such an hour
 How strangely dissonant or unusual sounds
 Flutter the dreaming soul ! The silence deep
 Was broken, as when frightened birds arise
 From some still forest bower. A steed's quick tramp
 Rang through the rural solitude around,
 And MAGDALINE, up-starting with surprise,
 Her pale hands folded on her heaving breast,
 Peered through the verdant vista, lone and dim
 That fronts her Cottage-home ; when swift as thought
 Her strained eyes met the well-remembered form
 Of him whose childhood's charms first taught her heart
 A mother's transport ! Motionless awhile,
 Spell-bound, she stood, struck mute with sudden joy !
 Till as he knelt before her, a faint sigh,
 And one full burst of tears, her brief trance broke,
 And while serener rapture thrilled her frame
 She sank upon his breast.

" Kind Heaven," she cried,
 " Hath blessed my midnight dream, my daily prayer,
 And not in cold neglect and solitude
 I now shall journey onward to my grave,
 But soothed and cherished by the light of love
 Even age may wear a charm !" And gently then
 Her eldest born, the favored EBERT, spake—
 " Fortune rewards my travel and my toil,
 And fondly would my true heart now repay
 The love maternal lavished on my life
 Till youth was merged in manhood. Oh ! no more
 Echo the drear sighs of these river reeds,
 Or the wild music of these mournful boughs,
 That moan at every breeze ! Oh ! quickly leave
 This melancholy hermitage austere,
 And share a social home !" With grateful heart
 Glad MAGDALINE consents, and soon she smiles
 Beneath a brighter roof. But not long there

Dwelt that shy guest, domestic happiness !
 In EBERT'S soul, with subtle poison fired,
 Inebriate with a love far less divine,
 The filial tie was loosened ; and his fate
 In hour unblest was linked to one whose charms
 Of outward form and feature, were the spell
 That wrought his ruin. As a bright-hued cloud
 May bear the brooding spirit of the storm,
 His beauteous bride, alas ! a soul betrayed
 Unworthy of its radiant tenement,
 And poor insulted MAGDALENE returned
 To the lone Cottage by the mountain stream.

That home was like her heart, almost a ruin,
 And desolate as her doom. Dark moss had grown
 O'er the discolored walls, and all around
 Was rank luxuriance or drear decay.
 In a forlorn monotony severe
 The dull days passed.

At length her younger boy,
 BERTHOLD returned ; a formal visit paid
 And proffered gold, but not the filial love
 More dear than precious gems. " Alas !" she cried,
 " The bitter mockery of a mother's name,
 But not one bliss maternal, now is mine ;
 My sole fair hope seems fading like a cloud
 Above the setting sun. My darkened heart
 Forbodes that HENRIC on the field of fame
 Hath proudly breathed his last !" A dream confirmed
 This mournful fear ; a warrior on the ground
 Lay bathed in blood and gazing on his face,
 She saw—her son ! " Farewell ! farewell !" she said,
 Awaking wild, " at least *thou* hast not scorned
 The grey hairs of thy parent."

Sorrow now
 Wasted her aged form. At last e'er Fate
 Had quenched life's tremulous flame, her HENRIC dear
 To make her dark dreams fade like morning mist,
 Returned,—an honored soldier, one whose fame
 Had raised his soul, but hardened not his heart.
 With filial reverence he kissed her brow,
 And when upon the broad light of his joy
 Dim memories cast their shadow, sudden tears
 Fell from his azure eyes like the big rain
 That sometimes from the fairest summer skies
 A transient cloud may shed.

A few moons passed
 When from a distant comrade HENRIC heard
 Rumours of war, and, with fresh ardour fired,
 Spoke of his quick return to that far clime
 Where all his laurels grew, "Oh ! bitterest trial !"
 Sad MAGDALINE exclaimed, " My *only* Son,
 (For what to me are thy false brethren now ?)
 Wilt *thou* desert thy mother,—when the goal
 Of life's long, weary pilgrimage is nigh,
 Nor soothe her at the gloomy gates of death ?—
 Oh ! leave her not to wither in despair ;
 Unwept and unattended thus to die !

There was a struggle in that warrior's soul
 Severe though brief ; 'tis hard when glory's smile
 Thrills the young heart, its witchery to defy ;—
 But filial virtue triumphed ! The fond tears
 A mother sheds are potent as the drops
 That the hard marble print, and HENRIC's heart
 By the hearth gentle, as in battle brave,
 Was touched ;—he paused amid his proud career
 To sweeten a lorn parent's solitude
 With looks of love ;—And as an aged tree
 Propped and protected flourishes anew,
 Poor MAGDALINE's autumnal hopes put forth
 A few pale blossoms more ;—her closing day
 Grew calm and fair ;—Affection's ever-green
 Twined round her heart ; and star-like pleasures cheered
 The tranquil twilight of her evening hours !

SONNET—TO MY TWIN BOYS.

YE seem not, sweet ones, formed for human care—
 Your dreams are tinged by heaven ;—your glad eyes meet
 A charm in every scene ; for all things greet
 The dawn of life with hues divinely fair !
 How brightly yet your laughing features wear
 The bloom of early joy ! Your bosoms beat
 With no bewildering fears,—your cup is sweet—
 The manna of delight is melting there !
 Twin buds of life and love !—my hope and pride !
 Fair priceless jewels of a father's heart !
 Stars of my home ! No saddening shadows hide
 Your beauty now. Your stainless years depart
 Like glittering streams that softly murmur by,
 Or white-winged birds that pierce the sunny sky !

ON EGOTISM.

EGOTISM is not always connected with pure selfishness, or an arrogant over-estimate of our own merit in opposition to the claims of others. Self-love is not essentially exclusive. A man may have a very high regard for himself, without having less for others. The vain are often warm-hearted. What is called egotism is sometimes nothing more than that almost unconscious overflow of mingled cordiality and self-content which are remarkable in men of great fervour and vivacity of feeling. When people are in good humour with themselves, they are generally disposed to be well satisfied with others, and in that open confidence, in which even reserved men will occasionally indulge in moments of hilarity and cheerfulness, egotism is the reverse of all that is exclusive or unsocial. The French are great egotists, but they are at the same time the most agreeable, the most polite, and the most considerate people in the world. If they do not conceal their talents under a veil of false humility, they at all events contrive that their own pretensions shall not materially interfere with the comfort and self-complacency of their associates. They do not seek to elevate themselves at the expence of others.

Egotism is especially offensive to egotists. We always hate to see our own faults in other men. The really selfish man is not always he who talks most about himself, for reserve under the mask of modesty often conceals a heartless exclusiveness that is utterly unknown to the garrulous and self-laudatory. We usually judge of our fellow-creatures by ourselves, and as an egotist of the worst species is impatient of the claims of others, he naturally preserves a cautious silence, as he does not expect that sympathy from his companions, which they never obtain from him. He thinks that all men will view his pretensions with the same invidious eye with which he looks on theirs. The frank and candid egotist, on the other hand, who

—“pours out all as plain
As downright Shippen or as old Montaigne,”

not having experienced any uneasy sensation at the pretensions of others, anticipates no want of a generous reciprocity of feeling towards himself. The silent egotist is a far less amiable character than the talkative one. The one is cold, intolerant and splenetic; the other frank, cordial and confiding. Women are undoubtedly greater egotists than men, and yet they are far more social and less selfish. They will run on

for ever about their own children or relatives, of their own domestic affairs, but then they are equally ready to attend to the concerns of others. They never dream of giving offence by making their own little interests the topics of conversation, because they do not grow impatient when it is their turn to listen. That women are not egotists in the worst sense of the term is clear from the generous devotion with which they will undergo any pain or trouble or fatigue for those whom they love, or even for strangers who may stand in need of their sympathy and assistance.

It is a sad affectation to pretend an utter indifference to one's own fame, or to speak with extreme disparagement of one's own powers. Mock-modesty is more disgusting than extravagant self-praise, because the last is at least sincere, while the first is hypocritical. The one is a mere weakness, the other borders upon crime, as all deceit and falsehood must do. Self-love is so much a law of our nature, that it is idle to affect a superiority to it. A man might as well attempt to persuade us that he deliberately prefers pain to pleasure, as that he has no partiality to himself. Without this feeling he can scarcely have a sense of his own identity. It is only in modern times, and in very courtly and insincere societies, that men have found it necessary to conceal their self-approbation. The ancients publicly applauded their own actions and boasted of their fame, and savages, who have not learnt to conceal their nature, record their own personal exploits in the presence of their assembled countrymen. "If you desire glory," says Epicurus, writing to a friend, "nothing can bestow it more than the letters which I write to you;" and Seneca, says D'Israeli, in quoting these words, adds, "what Epicurus promised to his friend, that, my Lucilius, I promise to you." Lucan has not hesitated to speak of his own immortality. In the following passage from the ninth book of the *Pharsalia* (as translated by Rowe), he thus proudly asserts his own merits.

• Nor Caesar thou disdain, that I rehearse
Thee and thy wars in no ignoble verse ;
Since if in aught the Latin muse excel,
My name and thine immortal I foretel ;
Eternity our labours shall reward,
And Lucan flourish, like the Grecian bard ;
My numbers shall to latest time convey
The tyrant Cæsar, and Pharsalia's day.

Ovid, in his *Metamorphoses*, has expressed a similar sentiment with equal boldness.

"Come, soon or late, death's undetermined day,
This mortal being only can decay ;
My nobler part, my fune, shall reach the skies,
And to late times with blooming honors rise ;

Whate'er the unbounded Roman power obeys,
 All climes and nations shall record my praise :
 If 'tis allowed to poets to divine,
 One half of round eternity is mine."

Perhaps if men could really know themselves, and only take credit for their actual merits, the world would be less impatient of their self-laudations. What raises our indignation is the feeling that their claims exceed their deserts, or that the latter are at least doubtful and require confirmation. Nobody is offended at the self-consciousness of indisputable genius, when it does not exceed the limits of strict truth and justice. When a man speaks correctly and with a modest pride of his own capacity, no one has either a right or an inclination to complain. There is a natural sense of justice in the human mind. A real claim is willingly conceded as soon as it is fairly proved. It is only when, like the fly upon the chariot-wheel, some insignificant human insect imagines he raises all the dust and turmoil of the world, that we feel disposed to be angry at his folly and presumption. We are not so much vexed at a man's turning his own trumpeter, as at his giving himself titles which are not his due.

It occasionally happens that what we take for an overweening self-conceit is quite the reverse. A man will sometimes talk of his talents and acquirements from a painful mistrust, both of his own judgment and of the feelings of others. He craves their sympathy and support. In the same way individuals of a certain fixed rank in society never trouble themselves about it, while those whose station is more equivocal are for ever talking of their rights of precedence and distinction. Noblemen think and speak less of their titles than tradesmen of their gentility. A man of mere wealth is jealous of hereditary rank and of the claims of genius, and when he rings his purse in our ears, it is only to conceal his real uneasiness with respect to the doubtful nature of his position.

The most offensive kind of egotism is, "the pride that apes humility." There are authors and eminent men who mince their greatness, and make themselves small in company, from a dread of exciting too much envy, or of throwing all their associates into a disheartening shade. They talk on trifling matters only, and with an affectation of simplicity, as men let themselves down to children. They will not "turn their silver lining" on the sight of their ordinary acquaintance. They wish not to dazzle their admirers with excess of brightness. They check the expression of their sublimer thoughts, and look mild and gracious. They are modest in their triumphs.

"And of their port as meek as is a maid."

Such proud condescension is insufferably disgusting, and is sufficient to irritate a saint. It cannot be denied that there is a slight touch of this species of egotism in Addison's *Spectator*. His affectation of lowering himself to the understanding of the ladies is a very bad compliment to his fair readers, and not very creditable to himself. Allowances, however, must be made for the low standard of female accomplishments at the period at which he wrote; and we must also admit that the extreme elegance, the benevolent feeling, and the vein of quiet humour which characterize his essays make us disposed to forget a little too much self-complacency and pretension. But still Addison was not altogether an amiable egotist. He was too apt to give his little senate laws, and to look askance at the best efforts of his rivals. His celebrated quarrel with Pope and the latter's exquisite satire upon the occasion, have placed the ungenerous nature of his egotism in a light as strong as it is unfavourable. Pope was no less an egotist than Addison, but his egotism took a most generous turn. Addison's authorial egotism, however, was not generally offensive, for he had too nice a sense of his own reputation and influence as a writer to betray any unworthy jealousies to the public. It was in private life, that his uneasy reserve, his impatience of equality, and his love of small flatterers and sycophants, gave so much real cause of regret to the better order of his admirers.

"It is a hard and nice subject," says Cowley, "for a man to speak of himself; it grates his own heart to say any thing of disparagement, and the reader's ears to hear any praise from him." Cowley, however, was himself an egotist, and ventured to grapple with the difficulty of which he speaks. There is no doubt that self is a very delicate and dangerous theme, not exactly because a man cannot say any thing in his own praise without presumption, but because the subject is so delightful to himself, and at the same time so rife with delusion, that he is apt to be carried away by his enthusiasm into an extravagant and absurd over-estimate of his own merits. If we are candid in our egotism, and exult only in the right place, and do not weary the reader or the hearer with a too elaborate detail, we may not only escape the giving actual offence, but excite a sympathy in our favour. The personal feelings and peculiarities of real genius are always interesting to the public, and it is difficult to conceive any species of writing more pleasant than a great man's autobiography. There is no page of Hume's History of England that we read with deeper interest than the brief but beautiful life by which it is preceded. It is a model of graceful self-history. Sir Walter Scott was also a most agreeable egotist.

His little personal allusions and reminiscences are almost as precious as his inimitable fictions. The reason why the egotism of some writers is unpleasing, is not that they talk too much, but too extravagantly, of their own powers, and too contemptuously of their opponents. When a man ventures to estimate his own genius, he cannot be too cautious of taking more than he deserves, or of doing injustice to others. In either case he commits an error peculiarly offensive to the rest of mankind.

It has been made a question whether true genius is conscious of its powers, but I think there can be little doubt upon the subject. It is certain that both Milton and Shakespeare were fully aware of the greatness of their endowments, though a modern essayist has maintained that the case with which the latter produced his works is an argument against his possession of any great self-satisfaction on their account I do not think so. Both the author and the artist have a proud consciousness of their power, when they dash off some wondrous work with a masterly hand, and with the rapidity and happiness of inspiration. They are often perhaps as much struck with the beauty of their own creations as the admiring world is. Shakespeare's Sonnets, which by their personal traits have so delighted the two Schlegels, who are puzzled to account for the neglect with which they have been treated by the poet's own countrymen, abound in illustrations of that proud and lofty confidence with which the writer anticipated his immortality. The following noble sonnet will afford a specimen of the style in which this great man dared to speak of his own fame :

“ *Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme ;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars's sword, nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth ; your praise shall still find room,
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So till the judgment that yourself arise
You live in this, and dwell in lover's eyes.”*

Ben Jonson, in his dedication of *The Fox*, alluding to what he intends doing, says, “ I shall raise the despised head of poetry again, and stripping her of those rotten and base rags wherewith the times have adulterated her form, restore her to her primitive habit, feature and majesty, and render her worthy to be embraced and kissed of all the great and master spirits of the world ;” and yet Shakespeare and

Spenser had then written and published some of their noblest works !

Milton's glorious egotism is almost as conspicuous as his genius. He felt that he had produced a work which "the world would not willingly let die." * Dr. Johnson has touchingly remarked, that "fancy can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton surveyed the silent progress of his work, and marked its reputation stealing its way in a kind of subterranean current through fear and silence." "I cannot," he continues, "but conceive him calm and confident, little disappointed, not at all dejected, relying on his own merit with steady consciousness, and waiting without impatience the vicissitudes of opinion and the impartiality of a future generation." There can be little doubt that he was supported by this "sober certainty" of future fame. Milton was not the man to be easily disheartened, even though he had fallen on evil days, and was "with dangers and afflictions compassed round." The fortitude of Milton was sublime. Let him speak for himself, in his own noble and immortal numbers :—

"CYRILACK, this three year's day these eyes, though clear
To outward view of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun or moon or star, throughout the year,
Or man or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope ; but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask ?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overpleth
In liberty's defence, my noble task
Of which all Europe rings from side to side :
Thus thought might lead me through the world's vain mask,
Content though blind, had I no better guide."

There is something particularly impressive and affecting in the fact, that with the dignity of a prophet, Milton always prepared himself for any great intellectual task by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit,

"Who touched Isaiah's hallowed lips with fire."

He reminds us of that period alluded to by Cowper, when

—————"The sacred name
Of Poet and of Prophet was the same."

In one of his prose works, Milton has the following reference to his poetical powers :—

"These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God rarely

* In the "Paradise Lost"—indeed in every one of his poems—it is Milton himself whom you see ; his Satan, his Adam, his Raphael, almost his Eve—are all John Milton ; and it is a sense of this intense egotism that gives me the greatest pleasure in reading Milton's works. The egotism of such a man is a revelation of spirit.—*Coleridge's Table Talk.*

bestowed, but yet to some, though most abuse, in every nation; and are of power to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune; to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness," &c.

When I once enter upon these quotations I find it difficult to stop; and though it is somewhat apart from the main purpose of this essay, I cannot resist the temptation to add the following exquisite sentence, in which Milton alludes to his unwilling entrance upon bitter controversies. His prose is as poetical and vigorous as his verse :

" I trust hereby to make it manifest with what small willingness I endure to interrupt the pursuit of no less hopes than these" (alluding to his poetical schemes) "and leave a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with cheerful and confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes, put from beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies."

Such a writer as Milton might well essay the height of some great argument,

" Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme,"

and demand the respect and gratitude of mankind. He could hardly form too high an estimate of his powers. An affectation of modesty in a writer of such vast intellect would be almost as ridiculous as the presumption of a poetaster. A powerful man is necessarily conscious of his strength, unless he is sunk in an eternal lethargy of slumber. To suppose a strong mind utterly unconscious of the force which it exerts, is as absurd as to suppose a similar unconsciousness in the case of physical energy.

The sin of egotism is more frequently laid to the charge of literary men than any other class of people, but perhaps with little reason. There is not much difference between egotism in print and egotism in conversation. Nor is it more surprising that authors should interest themselves in the merits and fortunes of the offspring of their brain than that parents should cherish a blind partiality for their children. The affection seems natural and instinctive in either case.

If authors (like other men) are egotists, they are not to be too indiscriminately condemned on that account. There is a great variety of egotism, and only that kind is disgusting or ridiculous which is either unsupported by correspondent excellence, or is connected with selfishness, envy and detraction. Chaucer, the venerable father of English poetry, in his "*Testament of Love*," a work which chiefly consists of a dialogue between a prisoner* (Chaucer himself) and Love,

* A reference to his own condition as a prisoner, in the Tower, where he was confined, it is believed, for two or three years for a political offence.

does not hesitate to do full justice to his own merits. He makes *Love thus speak of him*:—

“Myne owne true servaunte, the noble philosophical poete in Englishe (which evermore hymne busieth and travaileth right sore my name to increase; wherefore all that willen me gode, owe to do him worship and reverence both; truly his better no his pere in schole of my rules could I never finde)—He quod she, in a tretise that he made of my servaunte Troilus, hath this matter touched, and at the full this question assoited.* Certainly his noble sayings can I not emend; in godenes of gentil manlich spech without any maner of nicitie of storieres imaginacion, in wit, and in gode reason of sentence,† he passeth all other makers.”‡

Dryden confesses his own self-esteem, and after observing that he has “grown old in seeking so barren a reward as fame,” he adds:—“The same parts and application which have made me a poet, might have raised me to the highest honours of the gown.” To whom is such a truth as this offensive? When some one congratulated him on the merit of his celebrated *Ode*, “You are right,” he replied; a “nobler ode was never produced, and never will be.” Self-confidence, as Johnson justly observes, is the first requisite to great undertakings. It was the felicity of Pope, says the same writer, to rate himself at his real value. Pope was not, however, always a candid egotist, but would endeavour to escape from the imputation of vanity by some miserable subterfuge, such as affecting an indifference to poetical reputation, though he was beyond all doubt “a fool to fame” from his early childhood to the latest hour of his life. He would sometimes also pretend an indifference to criticism, an affectation which his actions so glaringly contradicted, that a child could have seen his insincerity. If Pope had been interdicted the use of the press, and prevented from reading his productions to his friends, he would have written fewer verses. His public egotism forms the most delightful feature in his writings. He is singularly happy in his allusions to himself and to his own friends. Lord Bacon was an egotist of the boldest order and never doubted his immortality for a moment. Buffon said, that of the great geniuses of modern times, there were but five, “Newton, Bacon, Leibnitz, Montesquieu, and *himself*.” “When I am dead, you will not easily meet with another John Hunter,” said that celebrated anatomist to his friends. These instances are alluded to by D’Israeli, who quotes also the bold avowal of Kepler:—“I dare insult mankind by confessing that I am he who has turned science to advantage. If I am pardoned, I shall rejoice; if blamed, I shall endure it. The die is cast; I have written this book, and whether it be read by posterity or by my contemporaries,

* Solved.

† Judgment.

‡ Poets.

is of no consequence : it may well wait for a reader during one century, when God himself during six thousand years has waited for an observer like myself." We learn from Burney's History of Music, that the fiddler, Veracini, said with impious arrogance, that there was but one God and one Veracini. Shenstone has recorded his thoughts and feelings, and frankly entitled them "*Egotisms*, from my own sensations." Walter Savage Landor has promised the public an historical work, and is persuaded, he says, that he will not be "confounded by posterity with the Coxes and Foxes of the age." Rousseau was a daring and yet a delightful egotist. His passionate eloquence hurries us along with such breathless rapidity over his burning pages, that we have no time to dwell upon his faults. Montaigne is one of the happiest writers on the delicate theme of self that we are yet acquainted with. Addison quotes the caustic attack of the younger Scaliger on the lively old Gascon. "For my part," says Montaigne, "I am a great lover of your white wines." "What in the world signifies it to the public," says Scaliger, "whether he was a lover of white wines or red?" Addison, who owed something to the father of modern Essayists, ought not to have quoted this taunt without softening it down with a kind word or two of explanation or defence. If Montaigne had talked about nothing but his taste in wine, and entered into disquisitions on such trivial matters only, he would long ago have been forgotten. Montaigne talks on to the public with the same unaffected ease as he would have conversed with his own familiar friends, and the great charm of his essays is their free and unaffected alternation

"From grave to gay, from lively to severe."

Addison is rather hard in one of his papers on the whole tribe of egotists, forgetting the egotistical character of all essayists and his own individual foibles. His indiscriminate censure of egotism is inconsistent with his often quoted remark in the first number of the *Spectator*, in which he explains how much more we are interested in a work when we know something of the author. "I have observed," says he, "that a reader seldom peruses a book with pleasure, till he knows whether the writer of it be a black man, or a fair man, of a mild or choleric disposition, married or a bachelor, with other particulars of a like nature, that conduce very much to the right understanding of an author."

It is certain that if Montaigne had written less about himself, he would have been less amusing and instructive. He was a great talker, as well as a free and social writer, so that his egotism was the result of a general spirit of communicativeness.

Other writers have been induced to pour forth their secrets into the public ear from the difficulty of finding some congenial private listener, from some defect of speech, or from a want of nerve or confidence in society. Addison, from whatever cause, was silent in company, and it must have been delightful to him to relieve his breast of the weight of suppressed thought in his elegant yet familiar essays. "Since," says he, in the first number of the *Spectator*, "I have, neither time nor inclination to communicate the fulness of my heart in speech, I am resolved to do it in writing, and to print myself out, if possible, before I die." We doubtless owe many of Cowper's poems, to a similar feeling. The less that sensitive egotist was able to communicate himself to his own private circle, the more garrulous he became in public. When his tongue failed him, he flew to his pen. The fire and point of his published satires, and the egotism of much of his poetry, were partly the result of a mere re-action of feeling after his painful timidity and forced reserve in private. He has given us a little revelation from his own heart in his poem on Conversation. Alluding to a habit of reserve in company, he says,

"The cause perhaps inquiry may descry
Self-searching with an introverted eye,
Concealed within an unsuspected part,
The vainest corner of our own vain heart ;
For ever aiming at the world's esteem,
Our self-importance ruins its own scheme.
In other eyes our talents rarely shown,
Become at length so splendid in our own,
We dare not risk them into public view,
Lest they miscarry of what seems their due."

Pope is said to have been restrained in conversation by a dread of the man saying something unworthy of the poet. No apprehension of this nature seems to have checked the volubility of Coleridge, who loved to hear the sound of his own voice. He, however, required undivided and most respectful attention in his audience, or his self-complacency was disturbed. He was satisfied with nothing short of an entire monopoly of speech. The slightest interruption brought him to a dead stop. He was rather a lecturer than a talker. He was a lay-preacher. He had no idea of dialogue. Dr. Johnson, though more dogmatical, was more magnanimous ; and though he triumphed over his opponents in a very summary way, the collision of different opinions, instead of making him silent, sullen, and disdainful, struck out the finest scintillations from his own mind. Coleridge was an egotist both as a man and as an author. One of the most daring egotists of modern times is William Cobbett. His self-praise and self-assurance are sometimes carried to such a length, that we

almost doubt if he is serious. It looks like caricature, a wild quiz, or a wicked invention of the enemy. Yet his manner is so open, hearty and unaffected, that the most fastidious reader is rather amused than offended. When compared with the sneaking, shuffling and under-hand tricks of more cautious writers, who would play the same game if they had but the same courage, its effect is "quite refreshing." Byron was such an egotist, that all his poetical heroes were mere personifications of himself.

Wordsworth's poems are "moods of his own mind." In one of his prefaces he does not hesitate to express his contempt for the critics, and his consciousness of his own powers.

"If," says he, "bearing in mind the many poets distinguished by this prime faculty" (the imagination) "whose names I omit to mention, yet justified by a recollection of the insults which the ignorant, the incapable and the presumptuous have heaped upon my writings, I may be permitted to anticipate the judgment of posterity upon myself, I shall declare (censurable, I grant, if the notoriety of the fact above stated does not justify me), that I have given evidence of exertions of this faculty upon its worthiest objects, the external universe, the moral and religious sentiments of man, his natural affections and his acquired passions, which have the same ennobling tendency as the productions of men, in this kind, worthy to be holden in undying remembrance."

Southey was the vainest of vain authors. His egotism and self-praise were perfectly astounding. Speaking of his *Kehama*, he says, "The everlasting column of Dante's fame does not stand upon a wider base;" of *Thalaba*, "I know no poem which can claim a place between it and the *Orlando*. Let it be weighed with the *Oberon*; perhaps were I to speak out, I should not dread a trial with Ariosto; my proportion of ore to dross is greater;" of *Maidoc*, "Unquestionably the poem will stand and flourish. I am perfectly satisfied with the execution—now eight months after publication, in my cool judgment. William Taylor has said it is the best English poem that has left the press since *Paradise Lost*; indeed this is not exaggerated praise, for fortunately there is no competition;" of his History of the Brazils, "I have always flattered myself that it might in more points than one be compared with Herodotus, and will hereafter stand in the same relation to the history of that large portion of the new world as his does to that of the old." "One overwhelming propensity," he observes, (that of writing verse, we presume, for he is talking about *Thalaba*) "has formed my destiny, and marred all my prospects of rank or wealth; but it has made me happy, and it will make me immortal." And yet he tells a friend, "I am no self-flatterer, Heaven knows!" Beautiful simplicity! If poor Southey could re-visit this earth a century hence to what a miserable disappointment he would be exposed!

Hazlitt is an egotistical writer, and is never afraid to praise his own writings, though he does not say more of them

than they actually deserve. The following passage seems to have been wrung from him by the attacks of *Blackwood* and the *Quarterly* :—

"If the reader is not already apprized of it, he will please to take notice that I write this at Winterslow. My style here is apt to be redundant and excessive. At other times it may be cramped, dry, abrupt ; but here it flows like a river, and overspreads its banks. I have not to seek for thoughts or hunt for images : they come of themselves, I inhale them with the breeze, and the silent groves are vocal with a thousand recollections.—

‘ And visions, as poetic eyes avow,
Hang on each leaf, and cling to ev’ry bough.’

"Here I came fifteen years ago, a willing exile ; and as I trod the lengthened greensward by the low wood-side, repeated the old line,

‘ My mind to me a kingdom is !’

"I found it so then, before, and since ; and shall I faint now that I have pointed out the spirit of that mind to the world, and treated many subjects with truth, with freedom, and power, because I have been followed with one cry of abuse ever since *for not being a government-tool* ? Here I returned a few years after to finish some works I had undertaken, doubtful of the event, but determined to do my best ; and wrote that character of Milimant which was once transcribed by fingers fairer than Aurora's, but no notice was taken of it, because I was not a government-tool, and must be supposed devoid of taste and elegance by all who aspired to these qualities in their own persons. Here I sketched my account of that honest old Signior Orlando Friscobaldo, which with its fine, racy, acid tone that old crab-apple, G*H****d, would have relished or pretended to relish, had I been a government-tool ! Here too I have written *Table-Talks* without number, and as yet without a falling off, till now that they are nearly done, or I should not make this boast. *I could swear* (were they not mine) *the thoughts in many of them are founded as a rock, free as air, the tone like an Italian picture.* What then ? Had the style been like polished steel, as firm and as bright, it would have availed me nothing, for I am not a government-tool ! I had endeavoured to guide the taste of the English people to the best English writers ; but I had said that English kings did not reign by right divine, and that his present Majesty was descended from an elector of Hanover in a right line ; and no loyal subject would after this look into Webster or Decker, because I had pointed them out. I had done something (more than any one except Schlegel) to vindicate the character of *Shakespeare's Plays* from the stigma of French criticism ; but our Anti-Jacobin and Anti-Gallican writers soon found out that I had said and written that Frenchmen, Englishmen, men, were not slaves by birthright. This was enough to damn the work. Such has been the head and front of my offending."

"I have let this passage stand, however critical," adds the author, "because it may serve as a practical illustration of what writers think of themselves when put upon the defensive." His friend, Leigh Hunt, who talks to the public as if the whole world were at his fire-side, does not speak quite so decidedly of his own talents, but he never loses an opportunity of opening out his heart. But with all his egotism, Hunt is one of the most generous and sympathizing of human beings. He affords a strong illustration of the distinction between a certain kind of egotism and mere selfishness. Poor Goldsmith was the most amusing of egotists. He could never suppress his self-conceit. He was jealous of every thing and every body that divided the attention which he expected to be lavished on himself. When some beautiful young ladies

attracted the attention of the company in his presence, he sullenly hinted that there were times and places in which he too was admired. This species of egotism was truly unworthy of such a man. Richardson, the novelist, was guilty of a weakness equally degrading to a mind like his. He would never let any visitor escape the hearing of some of his productions; and once in a large company, when a gentleman just arrived from Paris, told him that he had seen one of his novels on the French King's table, he pretended not to hear, because the rest of the company were at the moment busily engaged on other subjects. He waited some time for a pause, and then inquired with affected carelessness, "What, Sir, was that which you were just saying about the French King." "Oh! nothing of any consequence," replied his informant disgusted with the trick, and resolved to punish him. No literary man exceeds Boswell in contemptible self-conceit. His failing is too well known to need an illustration. Sir Godfrey Kneller was an awful egotist. I have an indistinct recollection of some outrageous and profane boast of his connected with his merit as a painter.

I repeat, that all men and women are egotists in their way, and that self-praise and self-love are offensive and contemptible only when they exceed the bounds of justice, and are linked to envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness. When we take vast credit to ourselves for unworthy trifles, or make ourselves ridiculous by pretending to more virtue or genius than we possess, or allow a spirit of exclusiveness or jealousy to blind us to the merits of others, there are few qualities which are more odious than egotism.* But these offensive peculiarities are not necessarily connected with a fair and proper pride. Without a certain degree of self-confidence and self-esteem, no man can ever become eminently great or good; and it would be difficult to say why any one should be compelled, out of a deference to the mean and envious part of mankind, to assume an unconsciousness of that merit which raises him above them.

* The more decorous manners of the present age have attached a disproportionate opprobrium to this foible, and many therefore abstain with cautious prudence from all displays of what they feel. Nay, some do actually flatter themselves that they abhor all egotism, and never betray it in their writings or discourse. But watch these men narrowly; and in the greater number of cases you will find their thoughts and feelings and mode of expression saturated with the passion of contempt, which is the concentrated vinegar of egotism.—*Coleridge*.

THE SEASONS OF LIFE.

I.

COULD beauty's early bloom return, and boyhood's voice of
 mirth,
 Like floral hues and songs of birds when Spring revives the
 earth ;
 Though forms should fade—and hearts grow cold—and life's
 fair flowers decay.
 'Twere sweet to know that wintry spell ere long might pass
 away !

II.

But when life's fleeting seasons fail, they leave the soul for-
 lorn ;
 Even Hope is silent at their close, of all her magic shorn ;
 Her brief successive lights but lead the pilgrim to his
 doom—
 The cold and dreamless sleep of death—the dungeon of the
 tomb.

III.

The green earth glitters in the sun—the skylark bathes in
 light—
 Rich odours float upon the breeze from vernal blossoms
 bright—
 A busy hum of insect joy the cheerful valley fills,
 And wandering Echo's shout is heard, like laughter, in the
 hills !

IV.

Such sights and sounds and charms we leave, and, dearer far
 than all,
 The faces that we loved in youth—the tones that yet en-
 thrall ;—
 Oh ! when the thought of that dark hour o'ershades each
 bliss below,
 How quails the horror-stricken heart—how voiceless is the
 woe !

V.

Yet when the solemn mandate comes that bids the doomed
 prepare,
 To change for death's dark stifling cell the free and plea-
 sant air,
 Can no sweet sound the prisoner cheer—no hope-rekindling
 ray ?
 Ah, yes !—the voice that frees the soul—the light of endless
 day !

—

LINES WRITTEN IN A LADY'S ALBUM.

—

LADY—though no poetic fire
 Breathe in my verse—no Muse inspire
 My soul with that resplendent lore
 That glitters in the page of MOORE—
 With WORDSWORTH'S sentiment profound—
 Or BYRON'S storm of thought and sound—
 Or classic CAMPBELL'S patriot glow—
 Or SCOTT'S free strain, whose numbers flow
 As wildly as the wandering rills
 'Mid Scotia's proud romantic hills—
 The state, the tenderness, and power
 Of SOUTHEY in his happier hour—
 The gentle truth, and visions bold,
 Of him* the strange sea-tale that told,
 Whose Mariner, with glittering eye,
 Held men like a destiny,
 And whose guileless Genievieve,
 Loved best the songs that made her grieve—
 Or SHELLEY'S wilderness of dreams,
 His thunder-clouds, and meteor-gleams ;--
 Though powers like these alone are given
 To spirits touched with light from heaven.
 Who seem upon this earth to wave
 Celestial wands—and thousands crave
 A spark of their immortal flame
 To cheer them on the path of fame,
 Yet crave in vain—and 'mid the throng
 E'en I have dared an idle song ;—
 Though barren rhymes my labours raise,
 Poor shrubs on which the sun of praise
 But seldom beams,—I do not fear
 Fair LADY ! thine indulgent ear ;
 For promptly at thy soft command—
 And who could check his heart or hand
 At Beauty's call ?—I've framed a lay
 Whose sound perchance some future day
 May bid thee hail with kind regard
 The memory of thy friend and bard.
 But turning to my task and theme,
 What rays of glory round me stream !
 The dazzling gems these leaves enclose—
 The various spells that Genius throws

* Coleridge.

On every page—the flowerets rare
 Transplanted in this bright parterre—
 Strike dumb the faint descriptive Muse
 As sun-beams mock the painter's hues ;—
 Nor need these simple verses tell
 The hand of Taste hath chosen well.

 AN INDIAN DAY.

MORN.

Lo ! Morning wakes upon the grey hill's brow,
 Raising the veil of mist meek Twilight wore ;—
 And hark ! from mangoe tope and tamarind bough
 The glad birds' matins ring ! On Gunga's shore
 Yon sable groups with ritual signs adore
 The rising Lord of Day. Above the vale
 Behold the tall palmyra proudly soar,
 And wave his verdant wreath,—a lustre pale
 Gleams on the broad-fringed leaves that rustle in the gale.

NOON.

'Tis now the Noon-tide hour. No sounds arise
 To cheer the sultry calm,—deep silence reigns
 Among the drooping groves ; the fervid skies
 Glare on the slumbering wave ; on yon wide plains
 The zephyr dies,—no hope of rest detains
 The traveller there ; the sun's meridian might
 No fragrant bower, no humid cloud restrains,—
 The silver rays, insufferably bright,
 Play on the fevered brow, and mock the dazzled sight !

NIGHT.

The gentle Evening comes ! The gradual breeze,
 The milder radiance and the longer shade,
 Steal o'er the scene !—Through slowly waving trees
 The pale moon smiles,—the minstrels of the glade
 Hail night's fair queen ; and, as the day-beams fade
 Along the crimson west, through twilight gloom
 The fire-fly darts ; and where, all lowly laid,
 The dead repose, the Moslem's hand illumine
 The consecrated lamp o'er Beauty's hallowed tomb !

THOMAS CARLYLE

THOMAS CARLYLE'S *Latter Day Pamphlets* Nos. I. and II., the first on the *Present Time* and the second on *Model Prisons*, have created some sensation. We have read them both with interest, because we were curious to know whether the author had really committed himself so grossly as some of his critics had maintained. We have read them attentively and really think that he has been very unfairly treated on account of these pamphlets. There is nothing half so extravagant in them as we had been led to expect. It is true that we do not wholly agree with him, but it is with Carlyle, as it has been remarked it was with Burke, who, even in his progress to a wrong conclusion, scattered a thousand amaranthine flowers of truth on the way-side. We were not startled but grieved and vexed to find it broadly stated that Carlyle had avowed himself an advocate for slavery. It is a painful thing to see a great mind take a step backwards at a time when even the most ordinary thinkers are making some progress in the right direction. We should lament indeed to see a man like Carlyle act the part of Lord Brougham, who after having been looked upon for years as a "Schoolmaster abroad," the great leader in the march of intellect, the sturdy champion of Liberty, fairly turned round upon his followers, and avowed that he had led them astray. We question, however, whether this avowal and change of course added one individual besides himself to the cause of Toryism. From a most enviable elevation he sunk at once into general contempt. So may it ever be with all who desert the standards of Liberty and Truth! So may it *never* be with Thomas Carlyle?

Great thinkers should be more than ordinarily careful to aim at clearness and precision of style. Not only vulgar critics have misunderstood Carlyle, but men whom he himself would be proud to please. With a heart glowing with the love of liberty—with a wide and generous sympathy for his fellow creatures under all conditions—he has been hooted at and ridiculed as the advocate of despotism and the slave trade! A most deplorable mistake! It is not so much the result of any want of sagacity on the part of the reader as the want of simplicity and directness on the part of the author. Carlyle's chief defect as a writer arises from his horror of a common-place. He must say something startling, and when there is no novelty in his thoughts he aims at oddity and mysticism of style. The consequence

is that in striving to increase the effect of what he says, he often nullifies it. The reader is bewildered. It appears that Carlyle has been saddening his own heart of late with a deep sympathy for the poor in Ireland and in England, and in his earnestness to support their cause has appealed to the patriotic feelings of their countrymen. He maintains that charity should first look at home, and ridicules the sentimentalism and spurious philanthropy which leads Exeter Hall people to head splendid lists of donations to lazy negroes who have all the necessaries of life, while they let their white brethren at home perish in the public streets for the want of a crust of bread. This is a right feeling; but in his hankering after effect, his imagination runs away with him and he not only overstates the case, but with his cloud of strange images and stranger words, he does himself the injury of getting his motives and views entirely misunderstood. The main object of the first pamphlet is to illustrate the fact that the year 1848 was one of "the most singular, disastrous, amazing, and, on the whole, humiliating years the European world ever saw." "Every where," continues the author, "immeasurable democracy rose monstrous, loud, blatant, inarticulate as the voice of chaos." If an unfair critic were to stop at this quotation he might lead the reader to conclude that Carlyle was a high Tory and an enemy to progress, and it must be confessed that he is so determined that every thing he says shall be said strongly that he frequently takes his disciples by surprise, and puzzles them not a little if they neglect to study him with attention and make every allowance for his peculiar manner. Carlyle is so far from being a worshipper of the powers that be that he looks upon all of them as *Shams*, as "solemnly constituted impostors." That the spirit of democracy is now almost universal the author deems a fact beyond all dispute; but the great problem he has to solve is what is the meaning of it.

"For universal *Democracy*, whatever we may think of it, has declared itself as an inevitable fact of the days in which we live; and he who has any chance to instruct, or lead, in these days must begin by admitting that; new street-bar-trades, and new anarchies, still more scandalous if still less sanguinary, must return and again return, till governing persons everywhere know and admit that Democracy, it may be said everywhere, is here.—for sixty years now, ever since the grand or *Fast* French Revolution, that fact has been terribly announced to all the world: in message after message, some of them very terrible indeed; and now at last all the world ought really to believe it. That the world does believe it; that even Kings now as good as believe it; and know or with just terror surmise, that they are but temporary phantasm Playactors, and that Democracy is the grand, alarming, imminent and indisputable Reality: this, among the scandalous phases we witnessed in the last two years, is a phasis full of hope: a sign that we are advancing closer and closer to the very problem itself, which it will behove us to solve or die;—that all fighting and campaigning and coalitioning in regard to the *existence* of the Problem, is hopeless

and superfluous henceforth. The gods have appointed it so; no Pitt, nor body of Pitts or mortal creatures can appoint it otherwise. Democracy, sure enough, is here, one knows not how long it will keep hidden underground even in Russia;—and here in England, though we object to it resolutely in the form of street-barricades and insurrectionary pikes, and decidedly will not open doors to it on those terms, the tramp of its million feet is on all streets and thoroughfares, the sound of its bewildered thousand-fold voice is in all writings and speakings, in all thinkings and modes and activities of men: the soul that does not now, with hope or terror, discern it, is not the one we address on this occasion. What is Democracy; this huge inevitable Product of the Destinies, which is everywhere the portion of our Europe in these latter days? There lies the question for us. Whence comes it, this universal big black Democracy: whither tends it; what is the meaning of it? A meaning it must have, or it would not be here. If we can find the right meaning of it, we may, wisely submitting or wisely resisting and controlling, still hope to live in the midst of it; if we cannot find the right meaning, if we find only the wrong or no meaning in it, to live will not be possible!—The whole social wisdom of the Present Time is summoned, in the name of the Giver of Wisdom, to make clear to itself, and lay deeply to heart with an eye to strenuous valiant practice and effort, what the meaning of this universal revolt of the European Populations, which calls itself Democracy, and decides to continue permanent, may be."

After many *pros* and *cons* the author seems to come to the conclusion that upon the whole the strong leaning towards democratical principles is prophetic of good; that, indeed, it has already produced a universal bankruptcy of imposture. The multitude, he says, now shout aloud for ballot-boxes and universal suffrage, but it is not by these means, he thinks, that the salutary change from the delusive to the real, is to be made permanent. In the following passage he illustrates what he means in objecting to Parliaments and Suffrages and Ballot-boxes as not the most perfect means to secure good Government.

"Not towards it, I say, if so! Unanimity of voting,—that will do nothing for us if so. Your ship cannot double Cape Horn by its excellent plans of voting. The ship may vote this and that, above decks and below, in the most harmonious exquisitely constitutional manner: the ship, to get round Cape Horn, will find a set of conditions already voted for, and fixed with adamant rigour, by the ancient Elemental Powers, who are entirely careless how you vote. If you can, by voting or without voting, ascertain these conditions, and valiantly conform to them, you will get round the Cape: if you cannot,—the ruffian winds will blow you ever back again; the inexorable icebergs, dumb privy-councillors from Chaos, will nudge you with most chaotic 'admonition': you will be flung half-frozen on the Patagonian cliffs, or admonished into shivers by your iceberg councillors, and sent sheer down to Davy Jones, and will never get round Cape Horn at all? Unanimity on board ship;—yes indeed, the ship's crew may be very unanimous, which doubtless, for the time being, will be very comfortable to the ship's crew, and to their Phantasm Captain if they have one: but if the tack they unanimously steer upon is guiding them into the belly of the Abyss, it will not profit them much!—Ships accordingly do not use the ballot-box at all; and they reject the Phantasm species of Captains: one wishes much some other entities,—since all entities lie under the same rigorous set of laws,—could be brought to shew as much wisdom, and sense at least of self-preservation, the *first* command of Nature. Phantasm Captains with unanimous votings: this is considered to be all the law and all the prophets, at present."

Carlyle exhibits great sagacity in pointing out the imperfections of existing systems, but is not quite so successful in

his plans for new ones. Even with him, with all his fine powers, it is easier to destroy than to build. When he is called upon to say what form or mode of Government he wishes to substitute for the old ones he tells us to decipher the universe, which is more easily said than done. It reminds us of Pope's advice to authors—"first follow Nature."

And your judgment frame,
By *her* just standard which is still the same.

Carlyle means to say, though he does not very lucidly say what he means, that nature's law is opposed to the authority of fools and rogues, and that only those who are really worthy to reign should be placed in high posts, and not the illustrious by courtesy or by the accident of birth.

"Alas, on this side of the Atlantic and on that, Democracy, we apprehend, is forever impossible! So much, with certainty of loud astonished contradiction from all manner of men at present, but with sure appeal to the Law of Nature and the ever abiding Fact, may be suggested and asserted once more. The Universe itself is a Monarchy and Hierarchy; large liberty 'voting' there, all manner of choice, utmost free-will, but with conditions inexorable and immeasurable annexed to every exercise of the same. A most free commonwealthy of 'voters'; but with Eternal Justice to preside over it, Eternal Justice enforced by Almighty Power! This is the model of 'constitutions,' this: nor in any Nation where there has not yet (in some supportable and withal some constantly-increasing degree) been confided to the *Noblest*, with his select series of *Nobler* the divine everlasting duty of directing and controlling the Ignoble, has the 'Kingdom of God,' which we all pray for, 'come,' nor can 'His will' even *tend* to be 'done on Earth as it is in Heaven' till then. My Christian friends, and indeed my Sham-Christian and Anti-Christian, and all manner of men, are invited to reflect on this. They will find it to be the truth of the case. The Noble in the high place, the Ignoble in the low; that is, in all times and in all places, the Almighty Maker's Law.

"To raise the Sham-Noblest, and solemnly consecrate *him* by whatever method new-devised, or slavishly adhered to from old wont, this, little as we may regard it, is a practical blasphemy forevermore, and Nature will in no wise forget it. Alas, there lies the origin, the fatal necessity, of modern Democracy every where. It is the Noblest, not the Sham-Noblest; it is God Almighty's Noble, not the Court Jailer's Noble, nor the Able-Editor's Noble, that must, in some approximate degree, be raised to the supreme place; he and not a counterfeit,—under penalties! Penalties deep as death, and at length terrible as hell-on-earth, my constitutional friend!—Will the ballot-box raise the Noblest to the chief place; does any sane man deliberately believe such a thing? That nevertheless is the indispensable result, attain it how we may; if that is attained, all is attained; if not that, nothing. He that cannot believe the ballot-box to be attaining it, will be comparatively indifferent to the ballot-box. Excellent for keeping the ship's crew at peace, under their Phantasm Captain; but unserviceable, under such, for getting round Cape Horn. Alas, that there should be human beings requiring to have these things argued of, at this late time of day!"

All mankind agree in the abstract principle that the foolish and wicked should be governed by the wise and the good, but the difficulty which an enthusiastic philosopher too easily overlooks is to invent some scheme by which the wise and good shall be elected and the foolish and wicked kept out of power. This problem Carlyle does not solve. He even acknowledges that he that is fittest for governing is often of all men the least desirous to govern. What then would he have us do? Would he wish the people to compel the good and able to act as

Rulers against their own consent? And who would he appoint to select the right individual from the million?

There is nothing we think very dreadful in what Carlyle has said in these pamphlets upon the subject of compelling men to work. His objection to the Government's encouragement of idleness is a very old one—any thing but original, however just. That there must be hewers of wood and drawers of water all men acknowledge. Carlyle makes a Prime Minister address the starving Irish in rather impressive language:—

“To each of you I will then say; Here is work for you; strike into it with manlike, soldierlike obedience and heartiness, according to the methods here prescribed,—wages follow for you without difficulty; all manner of just remuneration and at length emancipation itself follows. Refuse to strike into it; shirk the heavy labour, disobey the rules—I will admonish and endeavour to incite you; if in vain, I will flog you; if still in vain, I will at last shoot you,—and make God's Earth, and the forlorn hope in God's Battle, free of you. Understand it, I advise you 'The Organisation of Labour'—[*Left Speaking*, says our reporter.]

This is merely one of Carlyle's poetical extravagances,—nothing more. He never seriously meant to say that a man should be shot for refusing to work, but the critics who do not understand his manner, judge of him by the very letter of his law instead of the spirit of it.

The pamphlet on *Model Prisons* is even more moderate in its general tone than that on *The Present Time*. He objects with some reason that our prisons, formerly the squalid nurseries of evil thoughts and physical disease are now made so singularly clean and comfortable that they are a temptation to the idle who find themselves inside the walls of a model prison a thousand times better lodged and fed than the honest and hard-working artisan outside. He tells us that he lately visited a model prison that was one of the most perfect buildings in London. “In my life,” he says, “I never saw so clean a building; probably no Duke in England lives in a mansion of such perfect and thorough cleanness.”

“One of the whole, what a beautiful Establishment here fitted up for the accommodation of the scoundrel world male and female! As I said, no Duke in England is, for all rational purposes which a human being can or ought to aim at, lodged, fed, tended, taken care of, with such perfection. Of poor craftsmen that pay rates and taxes from their day's wages, of the dim millions that toil and moil continually under the sun, we know what is the lodging and the tending. Of the Johnsons, Goldsmiths, lodged in their squalid garrets; working often enough amid famine, darkness, tumult, dust and desolation, what work *they* have to do;—of these as of ‘spiritual backwoodsmen,’ understood to be pre-appointed to such a life, and like the pigs to killing, ‘quite used to it,’ I say nothing. But of Dukes, which Duke, I could ask, has cocoa, soup, meat, and food in general made ready, so fit for keeping him in health, in ability to do and to enjoy? Which Duke has a House so thoroughly clean, pure and airy; lives in an element so wholesome, and perfectly adapted to the uses of soul and body as this same, which is provided here for the Devil's regiments of the line? No Duke that I have ever known Dukes are waited on by deleterious French cooks, by perfunctory grooms of the chambers, and expensive crowds of eye-servants, more imaginary than real. While here, Science, Human Intellect and Beneficence have searched and sat studious, eager to do their very best; they have chosen a real Artist

in Government to see their best, in all details of it, done. Happy regiments of the line, what soldier to any earthly or celestial Power has such a lodging and attendance as you here? No soldier or servant direct or indirect of God or of man, in this England at present. Joy to you, regiments of the line. Your master, I am told, has his Elect, and professes to be 'Prince of the Kingdoms of this world;' and truly I see he has power to do a good turn to those he loves, in England at least. Shall we say, May *he*, may the Devil give good for you of it ye Elect of Scoundrelism? I will rather pass by, uttering no prayer at all; musing rather in silence on the singular 'worship of God,' or practical 'reverence done to Human Worth' (which is the outcome and essence of all real 'worship' whatsoever) among the Posterity of Adam at this day."

The only part of this pamphlet we entirely disapprove of is Carlyle's notion that society should *revenge* itself on criminals by extermination. All punishment is or ought to be for example's sake and not for revenge. In his hatred of crime he involves the criminal. We should have thought a large minded man like Carlyle would have made a generous allowance for the influences of circumstances even on the best natures. We were not so much surprized at the Tory Wordsworth* writing sonnets in favor of death-punishments which

* Here is a specimen of Wordsworth's anti-reform Sonnets:—

Forth rushed, from Envy sprung and Self-conceit,
A power misnamed the spirit of Reform
And through the astonished Island swept in storm
Threatening to lay all orders at her feet
That crossed her way. Now stoops she to entreat
Licence to hide at intervals her head
Where she may work, safe, undisquieted,
In a close box, covert for justice meet.
St. George of England! keep a watchful eye
Fixed on the sutor; frustrate her request --
Stifle her hope; for if the State comply,
From such Pandorian gift may come a pest
Worse than the Dragon that bowed low his crest
Pierced by the spear in glorious victory.

Moxon's edition of Wordsworth's Sonnets.

It appears that Wordsworth's mind in his youth, like the minds of his friends Southey and Coleridge, was stirred by and enchanted with the French Revolution, but they all three became the haters of what they had once loved. Most of our English poets are on the side of liberty, but these three became Tories. Imaginative men generally go into extremes. "Their generous ardor no cold medium knows." Wordsworth acknowledged that in the time of the Revolution he exulted "in the triumph of his soul" when he heard that Englishmen had been overthrown by thousands! The following is from the *Prelude* which he wrote in early life, but which he published only a short time before his death. It was his latest publication.

It was a grief.—

Grief call it not, 'twas anything but that—
A conflict of sensations without name,
Of which *he* only, who may love the sight
Of a village steeple, as I do, can judge,
When in the congregation bending all
To their great Father, prayers were offered up,
Or praises for our country's victories;
And, 'mid the simple worshippers, perchance
I only, like an uninvited guest
Whom no one owned, sate silent,—shall I add,
Fed on the day of vengeance yet to come.

No wonder Wordsworth long hesitated to publish such a confession as this.

are now confined almost exclusively to the strongly tempted "*lower orders*," but Carlyle's advocacy of so stern a law has a good deal puzzled and vexed us. That Thomas Carlyle should have become the advocate of death-punishment, and a fierce spirit of revenge, is a fact that we were exceedingly reluctant to believe. He will afford a melancholy illustration of the remark that when a great intellect goes wrong, it runs into those ludicrous or deplorable excesses of which mediocre minds are in no danger. Carlyle seems to quote Scripture in support of his terrible doctrine that society should never forgive the man who has sinned against its laws. How can men holding such a creed pray to God daily to forgive *their sins as they forgive those who have sinned against them*? It would be a direct self-condemnation. If Carlyle really mean what he seems to say we should like to call his attention to the following spirited and beautiful hymn of Reginal Heber, and ask him to weigh the question fairly whether the Bishop's verse or his own prose exhibits the true spirit of Christianity. They cannot *both* do so.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

I.

Oh God my sins are manifold, against my life they cry,
And all my guilty deeds foregone up to thy temple fly,
Wilt thou release my trembling soul that to despair is driven?
"*Forgive*," a blessed voice replied, "and thou shalt be forgiven."

II.

My foemen Lord are fierce and fell, they spurn me in their pride;
They render evil for my good, my patience they deride;
Arise oh King, and be the proud to righteous ruin driven
"*Forgive*," an awful answer came, "as thou wouldst be forgiven."

III.

Seven times, Oh Lord, I pardoned them, seven times they sinned again,
They practice still to work me woe, they triumph in my pain,
But let them dread thy vengeance now to just resentment driven;
"*Forgive*," the voice of thunder spake, "or never be forgiven."

In addition to Heber's poem we would call Carlyle's attention to the remarks on prisons and punishments by the good *Vicar of Wakefield*. Here is one passage very much to the purpose:—

"And it were highly to be wished," says the Vicar, "that legislative power would thus direct the law rather to reformation than severity; that it would seem convinced that the work of eradicating crimes is not by making punishment familiar, but formidable. Then instead of our present prisons, which find or make men guilty, which enclose wretches for the commission of one crime, and return them, if returned alive, fitted for the perpetration of thousands—we should see, as in other parts of Europe, places of penitence and solitude, where the accused might be attended by such as could give them repentance, if guilty, or motives to virtue, if innocent. And this, but not the increasing of punishment, is a way to mend a state."

Carlyle is the sort of writer most easily misunderstood because he deals in irony, and is in the habit, partly from intense feeling and partly for the sake of effect and to stir the sluggish, of over-stating a case when he wishes to strike a strong blow. We shall wait anxiously for some explanation from himself, for his new publications have excited so strong a sensation against him that if he has really been misunderstood or misrepresented he cannot long resist the temptation to say something that may keep his admirers in countenance and set himself right with the world in general.

As nations advance in civilization, human life rises in value and an increasing abhorrence is manifested of all Draconian laws. The British Parliament has within the last half century been compelled by the force of public feeling and opinion to mitigate the shocking severity of our old penal statutes. The punishment of death has been removed by formal acts of the Legislature from upwards of two hundred different offences, and, we believe, that in practise the law now recognizes but one crime, the crime of murder, as the proper subject of its last sentence. The old principle of life for life, has yet however a large body of supporters, and amongst them, as we have already said, is the poet Wordsworth, who has written a series of sonnets to impress upon his countrymen that the anxiety to save a single life in the case of a murderer, would be more legitimately directed to the preservation of many lives of infinitely greater value. The majority however, of humane and religious persons have now a strong objection to the law being armed with the power of life and death. In many cases this is a mere instinctive feeling—an unreasoning sympathy with the miserable culprit. Others object to it on reflection—remembering that there is no security from error in any earthly tribunal, and that death is *irrevocable*. It is thought also by many that capital punishment defeats its own purpose, because it too often inclines the feelings of society and even of the judge and Jury in favor of the offender ; while frequent public executions only harden the public mind, and abate the horror of even an ignominious death. It has been found that crimes are not less frequent in proportion to the severity of penal enactments and the number of executions. Some years ago when men were hung for theft, hundreds in the crowd of spectators were robbed by pickpockets. It was their harvest time. Another effect of over severity in the penal statutes is the uncertainty of their being put in execution. When men could be hung for pilfering five shillings or breaking a turnpike gate, it was difficult to find a prosecutor or a witness, and even when the offender was put upon his trial,

it was equally difficult to find a jury who would convict him by an honest verdict. When for some trifling theft the life of a fellow creature hung upon their breath, they rarely hesitated to neglect the obligation of an oath. There are innumerable cases on record of verdicts that must have been the result of the most extravagant self-casualty or wilful falsehood on the part of Juries, occasioned by the absurd and impracticable severity of old laws at a period of modern civilization. Whether or not, death as a legal punishment should be wholly abolished, still remains a difficult and doubtful question to the Legislator, but the public feeling against capital punishment, whether that feeling be right or wrong, is no doubt steadily increasing, and the Parliament of Great Britain will, in all probability, be compelled sooner or later to devise some other punishment, even for the murderer. Transportation for life is scarcely any punishment at all to hardened reprobates. It is mere change of country, and our expatriated criminals often lead more comfortable lives abroad than they could have done at home. They are frequently far better off with respect to all the necessities of life than many of their honest countrymen. In the case of the criminal in India, he is a particularly fortunate fellow when he quits its burning shores for the cool and wholesome airs of New South Wales.

We agree with Carlyle in thinking a residence in our model prisons still more objectionable than transportation; and on similar grounds. The prisoners are better off inside the walls than most of their friends outside. Such comfortable homes, so far from being a check upon crime, offer a strong temptation to it. But the difficulty of inventing an efficient secondary punishment is immense. It has perplexed the wisest lawgivers. It has indeed been discovered that *solitary confinement* is a fearful punishment, and in many cases far worse than death. But its effects vary as the character and temperament of individuals vary. A few weeks solitary confinement drives some to insanity or suicide; while others fatten on it. One objection to it is the immense expense of keeping up such vast establishments as would be necessary for a system of confinement in separate apartments for all great criminals. Those of our readers who may live beyond another quarter of a century will probably talk of the gallows, once characterized as the sign of a civilized land, as a departed symbol of an abrogated law. But what form of punishment will succeed it we shall not pretend to predict.

One of our public critics has expressed himself "really astonished" that Mr. Carlyle's late publications should have "attracted any notice whatever amongst people of sense." Mr.

Carlyle, he says, "writes in an idiom which possibly may be classical in Timbucktoo or Kamskatka—*just because he cannot write English*. He has abundance of admirers, amongst the pretty numerous class of readers and writers *to whom whatever is beautiful is disgusting*, and nothing has attraction but what is deformed and diseased, *like their own minds*." Again, "Carlyle's genius is the *genius of a quack*." His work on the French Revolution, according to the same critic, is "a stupid book; of which the very title is offensive, because instead of *The History of the French Revolution*, the "*detestable rubbish*" is called "*The French Revolution, a History*." This critic mistakes strong language for strong writing. He seems to think that he has dashed to the ground the statue of Carlyle and placed his own upon the vacant pedestal. Let him not lay that flattering unction to his soul.

Southey once complained that reviewers are apt to assume an air of superiority over the authors under their notice, ludicrously out of keeping with the real characters of the parties. Perhaps it is hardly to be expected from human nature that any man should be placed on the judgment-seat and hold a weapon in his hands, which, if rightly wielded, is one of enormous power, without some little consciousness of his own importance. If self-conceit should occasionally make him play a few fantastic tricks that excite only a laugh at his expense, he is easily forgiven, but when he so abuses his authority as to assail with expressions of arrogant contempt the master spirits of the time, even-handed justice commends the ingredients of the poisoned chalice to his own lips. If the critic just quoted can coolly re-consider not merely what he has written of Carlyle, but the *tone* of it, without wishing some portion of it unwritten, he has either less sense or less honesty than we are disposed to give him credit for.

It is not merely a little clique in London that sees more in Carlyle than is seen by this Rhadamanthus who pronounces him a *quack* and tells us that the sort of reputation of twelve years' endurance which Carlyle enjoys, could easily be acquired by any literary juggler of the meanest capacity, who would imitate his outlandish jargon. Carlyle has not been known and admired for twelve years only, but for a quarter of a century, and not by the herd of fools in one corner of the world, but by the leading intellects of more than one nation. He is even more popular in America than in England, and the first German critics have appreciated his comments on their own authors. "Some the style infatuates," says Cowper, "and by a tune entranced," they "sunder judgment hood-winked." But the harsh, abrupt and bar-

baric sounds of Carlyle's instrument, we must confess, drive away hundreds of hearers who might otherwise be well enough disposed to receive with respect and admiration the subject-matter of his revelations. And yet his spell, according to some unbelieveers, resides wholly in his style, and when that is translated into plain English, the reader wonders that the magic of strange words should make simple truisms so mystical and startling.

We have been asked to point out a single new thought in the pages of Carlyle. We would ask our querist in return to point out a perfectly new thought (a thought *true* as well as *new*) in any other writer. It would be difficult to point out a thought in Shakespeare that has never occurred to another man. Originality in literature does not consist in the utterance of something never thought before, but

What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.

Shakespeare is the most original poet that ever lived, but does his originality consist in thoughts which never passed through another mind, or feelings that never stirred another heart? Very far from it. If he had been *original* in this sense of the word, he would have been long since neglected and forgotten. Carlyle is a thoroughly original writer, inasmuch as his thoughts are not borrowed from the pages of other authors, but rise spontaneously from the depths of his own soul; they differ from other men's thoughts in being more strongly conceived, and more forcibly expressed. We are not now speaking of mere *arguments* or *opinions*, or speculations respecting particular branches or details of human knowledge in which men from time to time take different sides, until the general and irresistible advance of science demolishes many specious theories and much ingenious logic. We allude to those thoughts and feelings, which, under certain modifications and with different degrees of strength or weakness exist in almost every human head and heart, and were the same in the days of Homer and in the land of Greece as in those of Shakespeare in the British Isles. In speaking of the originality of a *thinker* like Carlyle, it is unnecessary to refer to speculations on temporary topics, for though he occasionally touches on these, and sometimes even makes them ostensibly his main subject, the real staple of his works is of universal and eternal interest; and with him objects the most trifling and evanescent are texts for the profoundest meditation.

Carlyle's philosophy is the exact antithesis of that of Jeremy Bentham. To the former the *spiritual* world is every thing; the *material*, almost nothing. He struggles earnestly against the utilitarian tendencies of the time. He calls it

a mechanical age; and does his best to make us remember that we are not mere machines, and that the physical is not the only or the best part of our nature. There is not much *novelty* in all this, but a great deal of *truth*, and he feels it himself, and makes others feel it more deeply than it was ever felt before. His strange style, which is now admired by a few, would be intolerable to all, but for the force of intellect that gives it life and power. It would be purely ludicrous or disgusting in feeble hands; and therefore there is little danger of its being adopted generally by weak thinkers. They find a conventional smoothness of manner more easy to support and better suited to decent common-places. But the Carlyle style informed with the Carlyle spell is often wonderfully impressive and picturesque, and makes us feel that the writer only "wants the accomplishment of verse" to show that he is a true poet. A few of his felicitous pictures, expressed sometimes in a single word, if married to verse, would make the fortune of almost any poet. But the inspired epithets and images that on the poet's page bear the stamp of immortality are soon passed over and forgotten in the prose essay.

Critics who assert that Carlyle uses a barbarous jargon because he *cannot* write plain English, should turn to his *Life of Schiller*, which was written some twenty-five years ago. Let them carefully peruse a few pages of it and then ask themselves if they could write more simply or more perspicuously. Or let them endeavour to write as forcibly as Carlyle in his later style. They will not find it a very easy task.

SONNET—SUNSET.

THE summer sun had set,—the blue mist sailed
 Along the twilight lake,—no sounds arose,
 Save such as hallow Nature's sweet repose,
 And charm the air of Peace. Young Zephyr hailed
 The trembling Echo,—o'er the lonely grove
 The Night's melodious bard,—sad Philomel,
 A plaintive music breathed,—the soft notes fell
 Like the low-whispered vows of timid love!
 I paused awhile, entranced, and such sweet dreams
 As haunt the pensive soul—intensely fraught
 With sacred incommunicable thought
 And silent bliss profound—with fitful gleams,
 Caught from the memory of departed years,
 Flashed on my mind, and woke luxurious tears.

I. I. F. E.

I.

ALAS ! what mystic changes mark
 Our pilgrimage below !
 As fitful as the fire-fly's spark
 The gleams of pleasure glow,
 And leave the startled spirit dark
 Beneath the night of woe !

II.

We learn not why the lustre dies,
 Nor why the darkness spreads ;
 For oft on Penury's wintry skies
 The soul its sun-light sheds ;
 While wreaths that Fortune's votaries prize
 Are placed on aching heads.

III.

And e'en fair Virtue's holy spell
 Not always here avails !
 Full many a noble heart may tell
 How oft her magic fails,
 When throngs of restless thoughts rebel,
 And hideous gloom prevails.

IV.

And what we hear, or what we see,
 And what we think, or feel ;
 As dream-like as the clouds may be
 That through the twilight steal !—
 Oh, God ! each mortal mystery,
 Thou only canst reveal !

AN ACROSTIC.

HATH she not an aspect fine,
 Air and features half divine ;
 Riches misers could not measure,
 Rarest of the best heart's treasure ;
 Innocence and friendship true ?—
 Eh ! says HARRIET, tell me who ?
 This, sweet Lady, this is *you* !

IMITATIVE HARMONY.

"Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,
The sound must seem an echo to the sense.

*Pope's Essay on Criticism.**

"Tis not enough his verses to complete
In measure, numbers, or determined feet ;
Or render things by clear expression bright,
And set each object in a proper light :
To all proportioned terms he must dispense,
And make the sound a picture of the sense.

Pitt's Translation of Vida's Art of Poetry.

DOCTOR JOHNSON has remarked, that "the notion of imitative metre, and the desire of discovering frequent adaptations of the sound to the sense, have produced many wild conceits and imaginary beauties." The truth of this observation does not overthrow the critical canon which Pope has rendered so familiar. As well might the occasional failures of the painter, or the mistaken interpretations of different judges, be adduced as an argument against the existence or value of some peculiar and subtle beauty in the pictorial art. It is not every spectator who understands the expression of Raphaelle's faces. When a pedantic coxcomb was lauding that great artist to the skies, in the presence of Northcote, the latter could not help saying, "If there was nothing in Raphaelle but what *you* can see, we should not now be talking of him."

The effect of imitative harmony in verse is generally best appreciated by a learned ear and a cultivated taste ; but it is in some instances of so palpable a character as to be perceptible to the dullest reader, though he is not perhaps able to explain the cause. Imitative harmony in verse is not a modern discovery or invention. Homer has been celebrated as the poet, who of all others exhibited the happiest adaptation of sense to sound. Vida, in his *Art of Poetry*, has illustrated

* In Spence's *Anecdotes*, Pope's remarks on this subject are thus reported :—
"I have followed the significance of the numbers, and the adapting them to the sense, much more even than Dryden; and much oftener than any one minds it. Particularly in the translations of Homer, where 'twas most necessary to do so; and in the *Dunciad* often, and indeed in all my poems. The great rule of verse is to be musical; this other is only a secondary consideration, and should not jar too much with the former. I remember two lines I wrote, when I was a boy, that were very faulty this way. 'Twas on something that I was to describe as passing away as quick as thought :—

So swift—this moment here, the next 'tis gone,
So imperceptible the motion."

Virgil's great excellence in this respect. In point of fact, the art of selecting sounds expressive of things is resorted to even in common conversation. All good Poets, and even Orators, attend more or less closely to the rule in question, though often quite unconsciously. The passions naturally suggest fit and faithful sounds. Love and sorrow prompt smooth and melodious expressions, and violent emotions obtain utterance in words harsh, hurried, and abrupt. We see therefore that this critical canon is founded in nature. It is not, however, to be denied, that like many other good rules we may make a great deal too much of it; for a too eager and ambitious attempt to copy nature in this respect may lead to a total want of it; as those writers who are pathetic or passionate on system become mawkish and ridiculous. The poet should trust wholly to his genuine impulses, unless he have art enough to hide his art, which comes after all to the same thing, for the perfection of art is nature.

Those readers who are not already familiar with Christopher Pitt's translation of Vida, would do well to turn to it, if they feel any interest in the subject of this paper.* Pitt was not a poet. He wanted fancy and passion; but he was a classical scholar and a correct and skilful versifier. His translation of the *Æneid*, though greatly inferior to Dryden's, has been praised by Johnson, and his *Vida's Art of Poetry* was once popular. It is curious to compare his translation of Vida with those passages which Pope has imitated in his *Essay on Criticism*. The following is one of the most celebrated examples of imitative harmony in the English language:—

Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar.
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labours, and the words move slow;
Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er the unbending corn and skims along the main.

Pope's Essay on Criticism.

Let us compare these lines with the translation of the correspondent passage in Vida:—

When things are small, the terms should still be so,
For low words please us when the theme is low,

* Or they may go to the Latin original, which Pope seems to have read with great delight. He has paid the author a handsome tribute of admiration.

Immortal Vida! on whose honored brow
The poet's bays and critic's ivy grow!
Cremona now shall ever boast thy name,
As next in place to Mantua, next in fame!

*But when some giant, horrible and grim,
 Enormous in his gait, and vast in every limb,
 Comes towering on ; the swelling words must rise
 In just proportion to the monster's size.
 If some large weight his huge arms strive to shove
 The verse too labours ; the thronged words scarce move.
 When each stiff clod beneath the ponderous plough
 Crumbles and breaks, th' encumbered lines march slow.
 Not less, when pilots catch the friendly gales,
 Unfurl their shrouds and hoist the wide-stretched sails.
 But if the poem suffer from delay
 Let the lines fly precipitate away,
 And when the viper issues from the brake,
 Be quick—with stones, and brands, and fire attack
 His rising crest, and drive the serpent back.*

Pitt's Vida.

Some of the lines in italics are so admirable, that I cannot help preferring them to those of Pope. The overflowing of the second italic line, as if the object were too vast for the usual limit of the verse, and the abrupt yet sonorous termination in the middle of the third line, are contrived with exquisite skill and judgment. The rapidity of the last four lines is also a highly successful exertion of poetical art, and is greatly superior to Pope's illustration of quick motion. His last long lumbering line is any thing but expressive of extreme swiftness, and as Johnson has rightly observed, the word *unbending* is one of the most sluggish in the language. The line gives an idea of space, but not of celerity. How superior, as an example of quickness, is the following :—

Let the lines fly precipitate away.

And how exceedingly felicitous is the pause at "*Be quick,*"—and the eager enumeration of the means of destruction !

But in the illustration of *smoothness* and of *toil*, Pope is superior to Pitt, and he also exhibits a great advantage over him in the general elegance and finish of his performance. Pitt has been obliged to borrow several of Pope's expressions, and some of his own are wretchedly prosaic. "*Strive to shove,*" for instance, is detestable. The ensuing couplets are not to be compared with the first four lines in the extract from Pope :—

To the loud call each distant rock replies ;
 Tossed by the storm the towering surges rise ;
 While the hoarse ocean beats the sounding shore,
 Dashed from the strand the flying waters roar,
 Flash at the shock, and gathering in a heap,
The liquid mountains rise, and overhang the deep.
 But when blue Neptune from his car surveys,
 And calms at one regard the raging seas,
 Stretched like a peaceful lake the deep subsides,
 And the pitched vessel o'er the surface glides.

Pitt's Vida.

This is tame and prosaic, with the exception of the *Alexandrine* in italics, which is highly expressive and picturesque. I must here quote a couplet from Wordsworth :

And see the children sporting on the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

The second is a magnificent line, and has an immortal air. The sound and the sense are equally impressive. It is even superior to a similar passage in Shelley, which is yet a very fine one.

———And hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

Pope in his *Homer's Iliad* has also a beautiful ocean sketch :—

The waves behind impel the waves before
Wide-rolling, foaming high, and tumbling to the shore.

While on the subject of the sea, I may as well also refer to Lord Byron, whose oceanic poetry has many illustrations of Pope's favourite rule. What a free, wave-like, sweeping harmony pervades the following exquisite stanza :—

Once more upon the waters ! yet once more !
And the waves bound beneath me like a steed
That knows its rider. Welcome to their roar !
Swift be their guidance wheresoe'er it lead !
Though the strained mast should quiver as a reed,
And the rent canvas fluttering strew the gale,
Still must I on ; for I am as a weed
Flung from the rock on ocean's foam to sail
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail !

The harmony of this splendid Spenserian stanza, (a form of verse which Shelley considered inexpressibly delightful) is quite perfect, and the ideas are in unison with the music. For some portion of its excellence the noble poet was perhaps indebted to James Montgomery, of Sheffield, who had previously written :—

He only, like the ocean-weed uptorn
And loose along the world of waters borne,
Was cast, companionless, from wave to wave.

In Lord Byron's grand and vivid description of a storm amongst the mountains, there is a specimen of imitative harmony :—

Far along
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder !

But let me return to Pope, who after all has given us more specimens of this peculiar beauty than almost any other poet. What an admirable illustration of a lame *Alexandrine* is the following :—

A needless *Alexandrine* ends the song,
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.

The hitch in the verse at the word *drags* has an excellent effect and completes the image. But *Alexandrines* are not

always "needless," though they cannot be very often introduced in a poem in the heroic couplet without an awkward effect. In winding up the volume of sweet sounds in the Spenserian stanza their grace and fitness are unquestionable. The cæsural pause of an alexandrine is after the sixth syllable. It ought never to divide a word; for when it does do so, there is a perplexing opposition between the pause of sound and the pause of sense. It has always excited my surprise that Shelley, who was deeply learned in the mysteries of versification, should have so frequently transgressed this rule. Even Spenser himself has occasionally an awkward alexandrine. Here are specimens:—

And decked with pearls, which the Indian seas for her prepare,
Great liking unto many, but true love to few.
Of turtle doves, she sitting in an ivory chair.
The rest was all in yellow robes arrayed still.

The reader sometimes hesitates for a moment how to read such lines as these. They require to be humoured a little. The cæsural pause, for instance, falls in the first line after *the-Ind*, which must be read as one syllable, and yet be somewhat slurred over. And the *y* of the word *many*, in the second line, is to be almost linked unto the *but* (*y—but*). The reader has his choice of the metre or the sense. He cannot attend to both at once in these cases.

The following lines from the *Essay on Criticism* illustrate the rules they would enforce:—

These equal syllables alone require,
Tho' oft the ear the open vowels tire;
While expletives their feeble aid do join,
And—ten—low—words—oft—creep—in—one—dull—line.*

In the next couplet, I think Dryden's name should stand in the place of Denham's. The first line has the "easy vigour" of which it speaks:—

And praise the easy vigour of a line
Where Denham's strength and Waller's sweetness join.

The anecdote given by Leigh Hunt of Moore's repeating with great *gusto*, the following lines by Dryden, remarkable for their "easy vigour," pleasantly occurs to me at this moment:—

Let honor and preferment go for gold,
But glorious beauty is n't to be sold.

* There are, however, many very spirited monosyllabic lines in English poetry. Here is an instance from Pope himself:

Nay, fly me, fly me, far as pole from pole!
Rise Alps between us, and whole oceans roll!

A comparison of a couplet of Dryden's with two of Doctor Johnson's, places the unaffected force and freedom of the former in a striking light :—

*Let observation with extensive view
Survey mankind from China to Peru,
Remark each anxious toil, each eager strife
And watch the busy scenes of crowded life ;
Then say, &c.*

Listen to Glorious John Dryden, and compare his brevity and directness with the pompous pleonasms of the author of the *Rambler* :—

Look round the habitable world, how few
Know their own good, or knowing it, pursue.

Hazlitt, I think, mentions that it was Wordsworth who first brought these two passages into juxtaposition.

The modulation of the following lines from Dryden's "Theodore and Honoria" is in admirable keeping with the subject. The pauses are very happily arranged :—

While listening to the murmuring leaves he stood
More than a mile immersed within the wood ;
At once the wind was laid ; the whispering sound
Was dumb ; a rising earthquake rocked the ground ;
With deeper brown the grove was overspread,
A sudden horror seized his giddy head,
And his ears tingled and his colour fled.

Here is another passage of a similar character from the same poet :—

The fanning wind upon her bosom blows ;
To meet the fanning wind her bosom rose ;
The fanning wind and purling stream continue her repose.

In Dryden's Ode on St. Cecilia's Day (Alexander's Feast.) there are numerous adaptations of sound to sense. The repetition of the word *fallen* in the following lines has a remarkably fine effect :—

He sang Darius great and good,
By too severe a fate
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate
And weltering in his blood.

There is a similar beauty in the ensuing :—

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again ;
At length with love and wine at once oppressed
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

The variation of the time in the following passage is extremely happy :—

Now strike the golden lyre again :
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain ;

*Break his hands of sleep asunder,
And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder !
Hark, hark, the horrid sound
Has raised up his head,
As awaked from the dead,
And amazed he stares around !*

Dryden seems to have particularly enjoyed the effect of representative harmony. The following verse from a song in his *King Arthur* has a very martial sound :—

*Come, if you dare, our trumpets sound ;
Come, if you dare, the foes rebound ;
We come, we come, we come, we come,
Says the double, double, double beat of the thundering drum.*

This, however, is a repetition of some lines in the first of the author's two Odes for St. Cecilia's Day .—

*The trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.
The double, double, double beat of the thundering drum
Cries hark ! the foes come ;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat.*

These noisy lines are perhaps not in the best taste, and remind me of Pope's description of Sir Richard Blackmore :—

*What I like Sir Richard, rumbling rough and fierce
With arms, and George and Brunswick crowd the verse,
Rend with tremendous sound your ears asunder
With gun, drum, trumpet, blunderbuss and thunder !*

In Bonnel Thornton's burlesque Ode on St. Cecilia's Day, there is the following amusing specimen of imitative harmony :—

*In strains more exalted the salt-box shall join,
And clattering and battering and clapping combine :
With a rap and a tap, while the hollow side sounds,
Up and down leaps the flap, and with rattling rebounds.*

Though Pope's Ode on St. Cecilia's Day is generally admitted to be a failure, and to be in almost every respect greatly inferior to Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*, it is not utterly devoid of merit. Dr. Johnson highly commends the third stanza, in which he says "there are numbers, images, harmony and vigour, not unworthy the antagonist of Dryden." Dr. Aiken remarks of the first stanza (which I shall here quote), that it "seems to imitate happily the music it describes."—

*Descend ye Nine ; descend and sing ;
The breathing instruments inspire ,
Wake into voice each silent string
And sweep the sounding lyre !*

*In a sadly pleasing strain
 Let the warbling lute complain ;
 Let the loud trumpet sound
 Till the roofs all around
 The shrill echos rebound ;
 While in more lengthened notes and slow,
 The deep, majestic, solemn organs blow.
 Hark ! the numbers soft and clear
 Gently steal upon the ear,
 Now louder, and yet louder rise,
 And fill with spreading sounds the skies ;
 Exulting in triumph now swell the bold notes,
 In broken air trembling, the wild music floats,
 Till by degrees, remote and small,
 The strains decay,
 And melt away
 In a dying, dying fall.*

But though Dr. Johnson bestows a general approval on this poem (the least successful of all Pope's works), and though he honours some passages with particular praise, this first stanza, he says, consists of "sounds well chosen indeed, but only sounds." I have already admitted the danger of too much attention to the art of representative metre, as it may lead the poet to overlook far more important considerations, and to sacrifice sense to sound. A similar danger, however, is common to all other arts. The painter as well as the poet may make too much of his accessories, and too little of his main subject. This is no reason, however, why the painter's accessories or the poet's metrical details should be treated with indifference or contempt. The music of verse seems to have a natural affinity to what may be called the music of thought, and no reader of nice ear or poetical sensibility can fail to appreciate its worth. "Harmony of period and melody of style," says Shenstone, "have greater weight than is generally imagined in the judgment we pass upon writing and writers. As a proof of this, let us reflect, what texts of Scripture, what lines in poetry, or what periods we most remember and quote, either in verse or prose, and we shall find them to be only musical ones." Beautiful thoughts and exquisite emotions "involuntarily move harmonious numbers."

One of Pope's best attempts at imitative harmony is his description of the toil of Sisyphus :—

*With many a weary step and many a groan,
 Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone ;
 The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,
 Thunders impetuous down and smokes along the ground.*

To every reader, who has gentility enough to aspirate the *h*'s, the second line is quite a task. He has given us another line that moves with the same difficulty :—

"And when up ten steep slopes you've dragged your thighs."

Here indeed

The line too labours, and the words move slow.

Mr. Crowe, the author "of Lewisdon Hill," has attempted a new version of this celebrated passage on the labor of Sisyphus, and it is not without great merit, though unequal perhaps to that of Pope :—

Then Sisyphus I saw, with ceaseless pain
Labouring beneath a ponderous stone in vain.
With hands and feet striving, with all his might
He pushed the unwieldy mass up a steep height ;
But ere he could achieve his toilsome course,
Just as he reached the top, a sudden force
Turned the curst stone, and slipping from his hold
Down again, down the steep rebounding, down it rolled.

Paradise Lost abounds in examples of the beauty of which I am now treating. The toil of Satan almost equals that of Sisyphus :—

So he, with difficulty and labour hard,
Moved on : with difficulty and labour he—

Now for the "*harsh thunder*" of the gates of Hell ! With what rapidity they fly open !

On a sudden open fly
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound
The infernal doors ; and on their hinges grate.
Harsh thunder.

Here is a happy imitation of an echo :—

——— I fled and cried out, *death !*
Hell trembled at the hideous name and sighed
From all her caves, and back resounded, *death !*

The pauses after the words *shook*, *glories* and *down dropped* in the next extracts are very effective :—

And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook, but delayed to strike.

And hardening in his strength,
Glories, for never since created man
Met such embodied force.

From his slack hand the garland wreathed for Eve
Down dropped, and all the budded roses fled.

The quick and joyous movement of the ensuing verses is a happy instance of representative harmony :—

Let the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound,
To many a youth, and many a maid,
Dancing in the chequered shade.

There is a *watery* music in the following lines :—

Fountains ! and ye that warble as ye flow,
Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.

A line in Hurdis's *Village Curate* admirably describes the sea-waves rolling back from a stony shore :—

Raking with harsh recoil the pebbly steep.

Charles Tennyson, brother of the poet-laureate, has the following noble description of the ocean-tide :—

The ocean at the bidding of the moon
For ever changes with his restless tide ;
Flung shore-ward now, to be re-gathered soon
With kingly pauses of reluctant pride
And semblance of return.

Dyer in his "Ruins of Rome," a poem that Wordsworth remarks has been very undeservedly neglected, has a fine specimen of imitative harmony, in which the fall of ruins is represented with great effect. The passage is quoted by Johnson with commendation :—

The pilgrim oft
At dead of night, 'mid his orison, hears
Aghast the voice of the time ; departing towers
Tumbling all precipitate down dashed
Rattling around, loud thundering to the moon.

Here is a description of carriage-wheels descending and ascending a hill. It is noticed by Mr. Crowe, but I know not who the author is. It is a good deal in the style of the preceding extract :—

Which in their different courses ~~as~~ they pass
Rush violently down precipitate,
Or slowly turn, oft resting, up the steep.

Dyer, in his poem of "The Fleecce," well describes the sudden delay in a ship's progress on the Indian Ocean by a cessation of wind :—

With easy course
The vessels glide ; unless their speed be stopped
By dead calms, that oft lie on those smooth seas,
While every zephyr sleeps : then the shrouds drop ;
The downy feather on the cordage hung,
Moves not ; the flat sea shines like yellow gold,
Fused in the fire, or like the marble floor
Of some old temple wide.

Dyer had a singularly fine ear for the music of verse. His "*Ruins of Rome*" is full of exquisite specimens of metrical harmony, and exhibits a rare power of description. Here is a musical passage :—

Thine too those musically falling founts,
To slake the clammy lip ; adown they fall
Musical ever ; while from yon blue hills,
Dim in the clouds, the radiant aqueducts
Turn their innumerable arches o'er
The spacious deserts, brightening in the sun,
Proud and more proud in their august approach.
High o'er irriguous vales, and woods and towns,

*Glide the soft-whispering waters in the wind,
And here united pour their silver streams
Among the figured rocks in murmuring falls
Musical ever.*

The following remarkably successful adaptation of sound to sense is from Pope's Homer's Iliad. It has greater freedom of versification than the translator usually displays :—

As from some mountain's craggy forehead torn
A rock's huge fragment flies, with fury borne,
(Which from the stubborn stone a torrent rends)
Precipitate the ponderous mass descends;
From steep to steep the rolling ruin bounds,
At every shock the crackling wood resounds;
Still gathering strength, it smokes; and urged amain,
Whirls, leaps, and thunders down, impetuous to the plain;
There stops,—&c.

Here are two more specimens of happy imitation of the sense by the sound; the first from the translation of the Odyssey, and the second from that of the Iliad :—

—————The string let fly
Twanged short and sharp, like the shrill swallow's cry.

Loud sounds the ax, redoubling strokes on strokes,
On all sides round the forest hurls her oaks
Headlong. Deep echoing groan the thickets brown,
Then rustling, crackling, crashing, thunder down.

The ensuing lines from Shakespeare's "Troilus and Cressida" seem inflated with the bulky meaning :—

The large Achilles, on his press'd bed lolling,
From his deep chest laughs out a loud applause.

The same may be said of this line from Milton :—

Wallowing unwieldy—enormous in their gait.

The tempest invoked by *Lear* rattles rapidly and loudly in the second line of the following extract :—

Blow winds and crack your cheeks ! rage ! blow !
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout,
Till you have drenched our steeples.

The progress of Milton's fiend is a very striking illustration of the effect to be gained by an artful and choice arrangement of words. The poet knew how to use monosyllabic lines to the best advantage.

The fiend
O'er bog, o'er steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings or feet pursues his way,
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps or flies.

Here is a similar passage from Pope's Homer's Iliad :—

First march the heavy mules securely slow,
O'er hills, o'er dales, o'er crags, o'er rocks they go.

Cowley laboured hard to produce an echo to the sense, and sometimes succeeded, as the last of the next four lines may show.

He who defers his work from day to day,
Does on a river's brink expecting stay,
Till the whole stream that stopped him shall be gone,
Which runs, and as it runs, for ever will run on.

Dr. Johnson observes of this last line, that "it is an example of representative versification, which perhaps no other English line can equal."

Here is a sketch by Cowley of a famished lion :—

His bloody eyes he hurls around, his sharp paws
Tear up the ground ; then runs he wild about
Lashing his angry tail, and roaring out.

To the following line Cowley thinks it necessary to attach a note :—

Nor can the glory contain itself in the endless space.

"I am sorry," says the poet, "that it is necessary to admonish the most part of readers, that it is not by negligence that this verse is so loose and long, and, as it were, vast. It is to paint, in the number, the nature of the thing which it describes, which I would have observed in divers other places of this poem (the *Davideis*,) that else will pass for very careless verses : as before

And over-run the neighbouring fields with violent force.

In the second book :

Down a precipice deep, down he casts them all.

And

Fell adown his shoulders with loose care.

In the third,

Brass was his helmet, his boots brass, and o'er
His breast a thick plate of strong brass he wore.

In the fourth,

Like some fair pine o'erlooking all the ignoble wood.

And,

Some from the rocks cast themselves down headlong.

And many more ; but it is enough to instance in a few The thing is, that the disposition of words and numbers should be such as that out of the order and sound of them the things themselves may be represented. This the Greeks were not so accurate as to bind themselves to : neither have our English poets observed it as far as I can find. The Latins (*qui Musas volunt severiores*) sometimes did it, and their prince, Virgil, always, in whom the examples are numerous, and taken notice of by all judicious men."

“I know not,” observes Dr. Johnson, in quoting this passage, whether he (Cowley) has, in many of these instances, attained the representation or resemblance that he purposes. Verse can imitate only sound and motion; a *boundless* verse, a *headlong* verse, and a verse of brass or of *strong brass*, seem to comprise very incongruous and unsociable ideas. What there is peculiar in the sound of the line expressing *loose care*, I cannot discover; nor why the *pine* is taller in an Alexandrine than in ten syllables.”

One would hardly have supposed that Cowley had so much studied versification, for there are few poets in whose productions (sometimes so truly felicitous) there are more irregular and careless lines.

I need not give any further specimens, for every reader, though he may not previously have studied the subject, must now understand the nature of imitative harmony in verse. It depends, it will be seen, sometimes on the sound of particular words, sometimes on the management of the pauses, sometimes on the length or shortness of the metrical feet, and sometimes on all these circumstances artfully or happily combined.

SONNET.

LADY! if from my young, but clouded brow,
The light of rapture fade so fitfully—
If the mild lustre of thy sweet blue eye
Awake no lasting joy,—Oh! do not *Thou*,
Like the gay throng, disdain the mourner's woe,
Or deem his bosom cold!—Should the deep sigh
Seem to the voice of bliss unmeet reply—
Oh! bear with one whose darkened path below
The Tempest-fiend hath crossed! The blast of doom
Scatters the ripening bud, the full-blown flower
Of Hope and Joy, nor leaves one living bloom,
Save Love's wild evergreen, that dares its power,
And clings to this lone heart, young Pleasure's tomb,
Like the fond ivy on the ruined tower!

1825.

INDIAN SPORT.

A YOUNG officer of the Bengal Army was proceeding up the Ganges to join his regiment. One sultry day he threw up the venetian window of his budgerow, and perceiving, as he supposed, on the distant shore, a numerous assemblage of dark-plumaged birds, he levelled his gun and fired. He watched the ball leap along the smooth surface of the water until it arrived at the shore and seemed to penetrate into the very midst of them. To his astonishment not a wing stirred. Another shot—and another—and another :—but the small dark figures remained as stationary as ever ! The shore glared with hot light. The water dazzled him with its intolerable radiance, and the air glimmered like the sand of a desert. His brain was dizzy. Under these circumstances the appearance of distant objects might have deceived the strongest eye-sight. He began to suspect that he had been firing away at a number of large stones. Half ashamed, (for all his boatmen and servants were watching their master's sport,) he fired once more, when, lo ! to his amazement and confusion, up rose a group of human beings with wild gestures and a horrible hulla baloo !

A number of villagers were up to their necks in the stream. The first shots had missed them, but the last struck one of the men upon the shoulder. The young officer made as fast as he could towards the shore. The men were at first threatening in their tones and gestures, but they were soon pacified. No wound had been inflicted. It was merely a bruise from a spent ball. The man thus struck was far more frightened than hurt. A present of a few rupees made him as happy as a prince.

STANZAS WRITTEN AT SEA.

LIKE blossoms pale the vernal orchard strewing
The light foam sprinkles wide the billows green,
And flitting clouds, aerial sports pursuing,
Dapple and variegate the moving scene.

Through the stiff shrouds the gale is loudly singing,
The big-waves revel round our oaken walls
That reel and tremble, as if hosts were flinging
The thundering cannon's rampart-shaking balls.

But here no human foes with fierce commotion
Now meet in deadly strife for mastery vain ;
The loud-voiced winds and vast up-lifted ocean
Confess, with mighty mirth, their Maker's reign.

DRUMMOND'S POEMS.

It is well known that Ben Jonson was so great an admirer of the genius of Drummond, that he travelled on foot from London to Hawthornden,* to pay him a visit of friendship and respect. During Ben Jonson's stay with Drummond, the latter appears to have occasionally taken down memoranda of the heads of conversations on literary subjects, and to have accompanied them with remarks upon the character of his guest. About half a century after Drummond's death, they found their way into print, but there is no evidence to show that he contemplated their publication. As Ben Jonson's host naturally felt a great interest in his guest, we ought not to be surprised that he should have entered in his private diary these reports of his conversations and notices of his character. Some of the latter may be rather severe, but no one questions their truth, not even Gifford himself, though he so madly accuses Drummond of a desire to blast the memory of his friend. Jonson's manners were rough, dogmatical, and unamiable; but Drummond's were precisely the reverse.† Mr. Gifford has given no shadow of a reason for his absurd and ungenerous assertion that Drummond "inveigled" Jonson into his house with the detestable motive he has attributed to him. As a writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* has well observed, if this had been Drummond's object, he would have painted Ben Jonson in colours far more hideous, and would have published his calumnies either in Jonson's life-time towards the close of which he was comparatively imbecile and feeble, and not in a condition for a literary warfare, or after his death;—for Drummond survived him nearly twelve years. I cannot conceive any reasonable cause for a hostile or malignant feeling in Drummond towards Jonson. The latter's pedestrian pilgrimage from London to Edinburgh, then regarded as a for-

* The poet's residence, "Hawthornden House," was about seven miles from Edinburgh.

† "He was a tender father, a kind husband, one who would not willingly give offence; a man of pleasing habits, alluring conversation, and strict piety. In addition, he was a methodical man, somewhat given to sallies of wit and humorous sayings; *kept books in which he noted down the verses of other men as well as his own*; had his letters too in order; and preserved whatever struck him as clever in the remarks of his companions or correspondents, or pleased him in the compositions of his own pen."—*P. Cunningham's Life of Drummond*.

Is it at all strange that such a man and with such habits should have recorded the conversations of so celebrated a person as Ben Jonson? Would it not have been more strange if he had omitted to do so? Yet, Mr. Gifford can only attribute such an act to personal hatred: he calls Drummond "an accomplished artificer of fraud," and characterizes his conduct as the "blackest perfidy."

midable undertaking, was as high a compliment as one poet could well pay to another ; and while there is abundant evidence of a reciprocity of kind and cordial sentiment between these distinguished men, there is nothing that can be construed into the slightest indication of an opposite feeling, except Drummond's character of Jonson, which (though drawn with that freedom which almost of itself implies that it was not intended for publication, and those vivid and minute touches that a close intimacy with his subject and a subtle observation would naturally inspire), exhibits nothing like jealousy or falsehood, and betrays no motive that is inconsistent with the reputation for integrity and honour which Drummond is acknowledged to have enjoyed in his life-time, and that nobility of mind which may still be traced in the works which have so long survived him. It is strange that Drummond's notes upon the character of a celebrated contemporary should be so harshly censured by a modern critic, at a time when a similar practice is so generally tolerated,—when the minutest actions and the most trivial observations of men of eminence are so commonly recorded by their literary associates,—and when the private history and the personal peculiarities not only of the dead but of the living are to be met with in every periodical that is adapted to the public taste.*

It is said that Ben Jonson wrote a poem descriptive of his journey to Scotland, which was inadvertently burned with other papers at his death. Perhaps this accident is unfortunate for the memory of Drummond, and the poem might have included much interesting and valuable evidence as to

* There never was a period in which eminent literary men were half so public as they are now. No sooner is the breath out of the body of a man of letters, than all his domestic circumstances are as regularly published as his works. Even his female relatives are sometimes severely criticised. Mr. Coleridge's minutest private actions, and all his personal habits and infirmities, are detailed and criticised in newspapers and magazines with quite as much freedom as matters connected more immediately with his public character. His host, Mr. Gilman, does not hesitate to publish to all the world the most confidential communications of his guest and friend. Even in their lives are literary men denied the usual privacies and sanctities of the domestic circle. All their friends and visitors are spies and reporters, and the frank conversations that other men are permitted by the usages of respectable society to indulge in without the slightest danger of publicity, are deemed fair game by every literary speculator who is desirous of publishing a book or gaining a few guineas by a gossiping and attractive article in a monthly magazine. Whether this system be strictly honourable or fair, I shall not stop to enquire. That the public is a gainer, there can be little doubt, and perhaps there is no lover of literary history who has not deeply regretted the personal obscurity of our earlier English writers. Shakespeare, the greatest of all our authors, is known only by his works, and they are for the most part necessarily of a nature so little egotistical, that they afford us but few and faint glimpses of his character as a man. The bare mention of his immortal name by a contemporary writer, is regarded with eager interest ; but how unspeakably precious would be the discovery of a Boswellian biography of William Shakespeare !

the manner in which these two eminent contemporaries met and parted.

With respect to the character of Drummond's poetry, the critics are at variance. Phillips, the nephew of Milton, who is supposed to have often echoed the sentiments of his immortal relative, speaks of Drummond's sonnets in the following terms :—

"To say that these poems are the effects of a genius the most polite and verdant that ever the Scottish nation produced, although it be a recommendation not to be rejected, (for it is well known that that country hath afforded many rare and admirable wits,) yet it is not the highest that can be given him ; for should I affirm that neither Tasso nor Guarni, nor any of the most neat and refined spirits of Italy, nor even the choicest of our English poets, can challenge to themselves any advantages above him, it could not be judged any attribute superior to what he deserves."

But these sentiments are evidently the original and exclusive property of Phillips himself ; for it is not to be credited that Milton, however he may have recognised the real merits of Drummond, would have sanctioned such extravagant commendation. Thomas Campbell is very indignant at the comparison of Drummond with Tasso ; though Mr. Pinkerton, "the modern writer" to whom he alludes in his "Specimens of the British Poets," is scarcely less laudatory than Phillips. "If any poems," observes Mr. Pinkerton, "possess a very high degree of that exquisite Doric delicacy which we so much admire in *Comus*, &c., those of Drummond do. Milton may often be traced in him ; and he had certainly read and admired him. And if he had not read Drummond, perhaps we should never have seen the delicacies of *Comus*, *Lycidas*, *Il Penseroso*, and *L'Allegro*." "*Perhaps*," says Campbell, "is an excellent leading-string for weak assertions ;" and he insists upon it that only one or two epithets of Drummond may be recognized in Milton. Campbell seems to be almost as ill-disposed towards poor Drummond as Gifford himself, though from a very different cause. Gifford's anger is an editorial weakness. He regards every attack upon the poet whom he has undertaken to illustrate, as a personal concern of his own. He confounds himself with his author. Campbell, I suspect, is influenced by two circumstances,—first, his aversion to Drummond's Tory politics ; and secondly, a want of respect for the poet's favourite form of composition—the sonnet. He sneers at Drummond's grief for the death of Charles the First, and describes his "*Lives of the Jameses of Scotland*" as a work abounding in false eloquence and slavish principles. I am not disposed to say a word in favour of Drummond's politics, which have nothing whatever to do with his poetical genius ; nor to defend his historical work, which indeed I never read :

but it is a curious fact worth noticing, that though now utterly forgotten, it had once its enthusiastic admirers. His race Walpole describes Drummond as "one of the best modern historians, and no mean imitator of Livy."

There are certainly passages in Drummond's poetry, the style and tone of which seem to have suggested some of the poetry of Milton, who, though he did not perhaps rate Drummond so highly as some have done, appears to have read him with attention and delight. There is an Italian air in much of the poetry of Drummond that would naturally be pleasing to an Italian scholar like Milton. Dr. Symonds, in speaking of the poet of Hawthornden as the earliest writer of the *true* sonnet, observes that he was "the peculiar object of Milton's applause and imitation." The author of *Paradise Lost*, however, in no instance condescended to become an imitator in which he did not immeasurably excel his models. His feeling for the beautiful and the true was so generous and ardent, that he would recognize merit even in less worthy pages than those of Drummond; but he invested the thoughts of others with the light of his own master-spirit, and gave them a glory which belonged originally to himself. Drummond has not been imitated by Milton alone. The comparative obscurity into which he has fallen, and the undeniable beauty of his productions, have tempted many modern authors to rifle his poetic treasures. Pope has not only stolen his thoughts, but imitated his versification. In his *Eloisa to Abelard* is the following line:

"The crime was common, common be the pain."

This is a very close imitation of the first line of one of Drummond's sonnets:

"The grief was common, common were the cries."

I shall give but one more example, though I could easily multiply such evidences of Pope's debt to Drummond.

"To virgins, flowers; to sunburnt earth, the rain;
To mariners, fair winds amidst the main;
Cool shades to pilgrims, which hot glances burn,
Are not so pleasing as thy blest return."

Pope's Pastorals.

"Not bubbling fountains to the thirsty swain,
Not balmy sleep to labourers faint with pain;
Not showers to larks, or sunshine to the bee,
Are half so charming as thy sight to me."

Drummond's Fourth Feastings.

Gray also seems to have read and imitated him.

"Far from the madding world's hoarse discords."

Drummond.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife."

Gray's Elegy.

It was Drummond's poem of *Fourth Feasting* of which Ben Jonson envied him the authorship. It is not, however, his miscellaneous poems which are now the most admired. In these he has many superiors, but there are few early writers of the Anglo-Italian sonnet who may be compared with him in that particular class of composition. With the exception of the illegitimate couplet close, the disposition of the rhymes is after the strict Italian model. Though quite Petrarchan in their tone, they also occasionally evince the author's admiration of the style of his English predecessors and contemporaries. It is certain that he was familiar with the sonnets of Shakespeare; for in his list of books read by him in 1606, he gives the "Passionate Pilgrim," which was the title of our great Dramatic Bard's first collection of sonnets. This was no doubt the surreptitious edition published by Jaggard in 1599. The Rev. Alexander Dyce, in his Aldine edition of Shakespeare's poems, erroneously asserts that they were first printed in 1609. Drummond's sonnets are superior to Shakespeare's *as sonnets*, however inferior to them *as poems*; that is to say, they are more rigidly constructed according to the laws of the sonnet, and have more unity and point, and are altogether better finished; but they have less richness and originality of thought, and comparatively few of those bold felicities of expression in which Shakespeare surpasses all other poets. Considered merely as sonnets, they are almost equal to those of Milton and of Wordsworth; but they have neither the sublime energy of the one, nor the profound sentiment of the other. Nor are they, indeed, so strictly legitimate in the disposition of rhymes. But in grace, ingenuity, delicacy, and tenderness, they are not surpassed by any sonnets in the language. Drummond may justly be styled the British Petrarch. Not only in his sonnets, but in many of his smaller pieces in different forms of verse, his style is quite Petrarchan. They read like free translations from the Italian.

It is much to be regretted that Drummond did not regularly translate the whole of Petrarch's sonnets. No British poet could have done them more justice. Mr. Campbell would say that we have sonnets enough already in the English language; and as far as their number only is referred to, I should agree with him; but this elegant exotic has perhaps not yet been brought to perfection in our own country, and both its intrinsic merits and the labours of its cultivators have been often very unfairly treated by the critics, notwithstanding the authority in its favour of such names as Shakespeare, Drummond, Milton, and Wordsworth.

The old comparison of the sonnet to the bed of Procrustes,

was, if I mistake not, first used by Ben Jonson, and it has been regularly repeated by every opponent of the sonnet since his time. The objection to its limits has been successfully answered by an explanation that it equally applies to all other forms of verse. There must be a limit of some kind or other ; and it would be difficult to give a reason why Spenser's favourite stanza is restricted to nine lines that would not be equally cogent in defence of Petrarch's stanza of fourteen. A sonnet does not necessarily stand alone any more than a Spenserian stanza, and a long poem may be constructed of the one as well as of the other. It has been found, indeed, that the sonnet on account of its greater length may be more easily rendered independent and complete in itself than the Spenserian stanza, which, however, is subjected to much the same rules. The sense ought to conclude with the last line, which should wind up with point, emphasis, and fullness. A fresh subject cannot properly be introduced into the middle of it. It is the opinion of the Italian critics, that a single sentiment or emotion may be more happily developed in a sonnet than in any other form of verse : and it seems as if its limits were particularly well calculated for the purpose. If it were longer, the leading idea would be weakened by too much diffusion ; and if it were shorter, there might be too much compression and a consequent failure in point of perspicuity and completeness.

The sonnet was very popular in the reign of Henry the Eighth, and subsequently in that of Elizabeth. Our poetry owes this form of verse to Italy, to whom England was indebted, so early as the time of Edward the Third, for many other elegant additions to her literature. Chaucer borrowed largely from Boccaccio, who has been rather impudently pilaged by the majority of our story-tellers in metre. Petrarch was not much imitated by our poets before the time of Wyatt and Surrey, who made the sonnet fashionable. Though Shakespeare is not supposed to have been an Italian scholar, it is certain that he made very free use in his plays of the plots of many Italian novels, of which rude translations into English were abundant. His own sonnets, however, are not of an Italian cast. When the passion for Italian poetry declined, and with Charles the Second came in a taste for the wits of France, the sonnet was almost abandoned, and so late as the time of Dr. Johnson it was spoken of with great contempt. Johnson himself, in noticing Milton, paid his own language so bad a compliment as to suppose that it was utterly impossible to naturalize a form of verse requiring so much flexibility of diction and variety of rhyme. With a revived taste for our old Elizabethan poets, we have again

reverted to the cultivation of the sonnet, and with a degree of success which proves that any failure on the part of individuals is not to be attributed so much to the poverty or stiffness of our language, as to a want of skill in the artist who has to work with such a noble though ill-appreciated instrument. The most Petrarchan sonnets in the time of Elizabeth or James were undoubtedly those of Drummond; and though they have lost their popularity, they are resorted to by the poetical student, who can still read them with delight. It is evident that Drummond was a careful and reverential student of Petrarch. In our own time, the most celebrated sonnets are those of Wordsworth, which are often very exquisite both in thought and diction, though occasionally somewhat deficient in unity and point. Wordsworth has translated only two or three Italian sonnets, but has written a very great number of original ones, and has very clearly shown, that the golden fetters of rhyme can be worn almost as gracefully by an English as by an Italian poet.*

To the mere versifier who possesses a ready command of rhymes and a store of poetical common-places, there is no form of composition that appears more easy, but which in reality is more difficult than the sonnet. If apt rhymes and a poetical diction were all that is requisite, the task would indeed be easy after a very little practice. But the mechanical difficulties of the sonnet have been ridiculously over-rated, while its higher essentials have been almost entirely overlooked. Dr. Johnson's decision respecting what he deemed the inapplicability of the English language to the fabric of the sonnet, has been most triumphantly disproved by several of our living writers. The sonnets of

* Of all the translators of Petrarch (of which there is quite a host) the most elegant and faithful is Lady Dacre. In the literary circles of London, a few specimens of her translations have been spoken of with unbounded admiration, and occasionally the public journals have alluded to them with great respect. But with a rare modesty her ladyship has hitherto refused to collect and lay them before the public, with the exception of a few begged from her by Ugo Foscolo, for his highly elegant and interesting *Essays on Petrarch*, which were presented to her ladyship with a very complimentary dedication. "I am prompted," says Foscolo, "to inscribe these pages with your ladyship's name, as well by my own gratitude, as by the opinion of those distinguished literary characters, whose kind assistance, *surpassed only by yours*, has enabled me to present my *Essays* to the English reader. *With one voice and with national pride they pronounce that your poetry has preserved the very spirit of Petrarch* with a fidelity hardly to be hoped for, and certainly unattained, by any other translation." This is high praise and from high authority. Mr. Matthias, Mr. Pannizi, and others, have expressed themselves, in similar terms, of Lady Dacre's translations. All the praises, however, that her ladyship received, could not induce her to publish them; though, at the earnest entreaty of learned and tasteful friends, she at last printed a few copies for *private distribution*. In 1836 she printed a second and larger collection, but also exclusively for her friends.

Wordsworth, in particular, may be referred to as a noble illustration of the flexibility of our language, for it is quite evident from their perfect ease and freedom that the poet found no difficulty in attending to the strictest Italian models. When Johnson remarked that the sonnet had never succeeded in our language, he had read, or ought to have read, the sonnets of Drummond, and those of Milton were immediately before him. Shakespeare's sonnets cannot be adduced as bearing upon our present argument, because though full of thought and fancy and feeling, they are mere *quartorzians* or poems of fourteen lines divided into three stanzas of alternate rhymes, and a concluding couplet, and their sole claim to the title of sonnets consists in their being of the required length.

But Milton's sonnets, independent of their poetical merits, are entitled to great praise for their mechanical construction, and their strict accordance with the laws and practice of the Italian poets; and Dr. Johnson never fell into a greater error of judgment than when he pronounced these little poems of the author of *Paradise Lost* to be "undeserving of particular criticism." "Of the best," he says, "it can only be said that *they are not bad*, and perhaps only the eighth and the twenty-first are entitled to *this slender commendation*." The blindness or prejudice of this decision is amazing. We turn to the pages of Milton, and take almost at random, a couple of his sonnets. These (the 18th and 19th) are amongst those excluded from the honour of Dr. Johnson's "slender commendation." According to him, therefore, they are positively bad!

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEMONTE.

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
E'en they who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. The moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundred fold, who, having learned the way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

ON HIS BLINDNESS.

When I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he, returning chide;
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask: but Patience, to prevent

The murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's works, or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best: his state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

That any man setting himself up as a critic should be utterly insensible to the poetical and impassioned spirit, the masculine strength, and the severe beauty of Milton's sonnets, is indeed surprising. Johnson's contemptuous notice of them is only equalled in absurdity and injustice by the flippant insolence of Steevens respecting those of Shakespeare, which he had the audacity to assert were "written in the highest strain of affectation, pedantry, circumlocution and nonsense."

I shall now give a few specimens of Drummond's genius in this class of compositions. I dare say that they will be "as good as manuscript" to some of my readers; and those who have perused them before, will assuredly have no objection to meet with them again.

The following is elegant and compact, and does not read as if it had been written about two hundred years ago:—

HUMAN FRAILTY.

A good that never satisfies the mind
A beauty fading like the April flow'rs,
A sweet with floods of gall that runs combin'd,
A pleasure passing ere in thought made ours,
A honor that more fickle is than wind,
A glory at opinion's frown that lowers,
A treasury which bankrupt time devours,
A knowledge than grave ignorance more blind,
A vain delight our equals to command,
A style of greatness, in effect a dream;
A swelling thought of holding sea and land,
A servile lot, deck'd with a pompous name;
Are the strange ends we toil for here below,
Till wisest death make us our errors know.

Almost every poet may echo the sentiment of the next sonnet:—

I know that all beneath the moon decays,
And what by mortals in this world is brought
In Time's great periods shall return to nought;
That fairest states have fatal nights and days.
I know that all the Muses' heavenly lays,
With toil of sprite, which are so dearly bought,
As idle sounds, of few, or none are sought;
That there is nothing lighter than vain praise.
I know frail beauty's like the purple flow'r
To which one morn oft birth and death affords,
That love a jarring is of mind's accords,
Where sense and will bring under reason's power.
Know what I list, this all cannot me move,
But, that, alas, I both must write and love.

The smart antithetic style of the ensuing shews great facility and power of versification :—

Fair is my yoke, though grievous be my pains,
Sweet are my wounds, although they deeply smart,
My bit is gold, though shorten'd be the reins,
My bondage brave, though I may not depart ;
Although I burn, the fire which doth impart
Those flames, so sweet reviving force contains,
That like Arabia's bird my wasted heart,
Made quick by death, more lively still remains.
I joy, though oft my waking eyes spend tears,
I never want delight, even when I groan,
Best 'companied when most I am alone,
A heaven of hopes I have 'midst hell of fears ;
Thus every way contentment strange I find,
But most in her rare beauty, my rare mind.

The line in italics has been often imitated. Milton is amongst the imitators.

For solitude is sometimes best society.

There is much grace and beauty in the following address to Sleep :—

Sleep, Silence, child, sweet father of soft rest,
Prince whose approach peace to all mortals brings,
Indifferent host to shepherds and to kings,
Sole comforter of minds which are oppress'd,
Lo, by thy charming rod, all breathing things
Lie slumb'ring, with forgetfulness possess'd,
And yet o'er me to spread thy drowsy wings
Thou sparest, alas ! who cannot be thy guest.
Since I am thine ; O come, but with that face
To inward light which thou art wont to shew,
With feigned solace ease a true felt woe ;
Or if, deaf god, thou do deny that grace,
Come as thou wilt, and what thou wilt bequeath,
I long to *kiss the image of my death.*

This sonnet seems to have been suggested by Sir Philip Sidney's on the same subject. The third line of Drummond's sonnet is like the fourth of Sidney's.

" Come, Sleep—O Sleep, the certain knot of peace !
The baiting place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
Th' indifferent judge between the high and low !"

Sir Philip Sidney.

Mr. Cunningham's new edition of Drummond's Poems is enriched with several of his sonnets never before published, procured from the Antiquarian Society of Edinburgh, and illustrated with notes by David Laing.

STANZAS.

I.

Oh ! visit not
My couch of dreamless sleep,
When even thou shalt be forgot
By this so faithful breast ;
But let the stranger watch my silent rest,
With eyes that will not weep !

II.

Oh ! come not, Maid !
I crave no sigh from thee,
E'en when my mouldering frame is laid
Within the cold dull grave ;
For the yew shall moan, and the night-wind rave
A fitting dirge for me !

III.

Oh ! weep not, Love !
While grief were agony,—
Wait till the balm of time remove
The fever of the brain,
And dear though mournful dreams alone remain
Of me and misery !

IV.

Oh ! then, fair Maid !
By twilight linger near
The rustling trees whose green boughs shade
My lonely place of rest
And hallow thou the turf that wraps my breast
With pity's purest tear !

ON THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

EVERY man has the right of private judgment, and, indeed, every man avails himself of that right, though often unconsciously, and he cannot help doing so in every mental decision. It is true that a man in some cases, from deference or a pious awe, professedly resigns the exercise of private judgment. But even in this very act he exercises it. When he reposes on the authority of others, his trust and belief are as much the result of his own judgment as when he rejects that authority and rests on a different kind of evidence. He always decides for himself eventually as to what authority or opinion, or probability, or any other evidence, is sufficient, or insufficient, to justify his belief or unbelief. To put a strong case:—if even the Deity were to address himself directly to the most pious man living, that man's belief in the truth of the divine words would be the result of a mental process, however instantaneous or unconscious. He would feel that all God's utterances were *necessarily true* ; but that feeling or belief is private judgment, and if that judgment were grossly imperfect, or perverted, or blinded, it might chance to miss the right conclusion. A madman, or an idiot, or one who having a judgment should not use it (if that were possible), might even disbelieve the Deity !

When the mind, in a sound state, is satisfied that it is God who speaks, its conviction of the *truth* of what is said, is instantaneous—rapid as lightning—but that conviction is not the less a process of the mind—in other words, the result of private judgment. What God has said must not only be necessarily *true*, but in every way necessarily *right*. He, therefore, who believes that God addresses him, cannot possibly venture on the hideous blasphemy of questioning the propriety or consistency of what he believes to be uttered by the All-Wise and the All-Good, though what is so uttered may be quite beyond his comprehension, or entirely opposed to all his previous conceptions of the eternal fitness of things.

But the case is very different when certain words are attributed by certain men to God. Then it is not God's truth that becomes the immediate question, but man's truth. It is illogical and indeed blasphemous to confound the two. It is not only a *right* that we exercise when we examine man's testimony in such a case with the utmost care and caution, but a duty that we cannot neglect without criminality. Now, whether we receive or reject the testimony of men when it reports a supposed or actual revelation from on high, we, in either

case, exercise our private judgment. Even when we rely on the authority of wiser men than ourselves, it is but a choice of evidence, or of the materials on which the mind rests its opinion. The private judgment is always the final resort.

He who denies to others, or even to himself, the right of private judgment is in that very denial exercising his own. This blundering inconsistency arises from the neglect of most men to analyze the movements of their own mind : some *dislike* to examine their own impulses, and others *cannot*.

Some persons insist upon your believing every thing or nothing. You must either reject all, or swallow all. This has led to fierce controversies in theology. A man believes that the Bible, speaking of its general contents, is the word of God ; but if he qualify his profession of faith by hinting that one single passage appears to him a human interpolation, he is in the eyes of some, little better than an infidel : perhaps worse—though an edition of the Bible was once published, containing six thousand errors, and it is said one sect bribed a printer with £1,500 to alter a text.* If, say these people, you believe the Bible to be the word of God, it is blasphemous to doubt any part of it. But a man may believe that one portion of the report of a speech is correct, and without inconsistency doubt the rest. There may be an error of the press—a slip of the pen—an ignorant blunder of the copyist—or an interpolation. When human instruments are employed, errors are always *possible*. Well, we will suppose that a Christian man believes, that there may, even to this day, remain uncertain uninspired interpolations amongst the divine words taken down by inspired reporters. The *possibility* of such interpolation is denied. If this be true, the men who have separated what they pronounced false from what they pronounced to be genuine, were *infallible*. But as human infallibility has not yet been demonstrated, one man has as much right as another to exercise his judgment on doubtful passages—or passages that to him are doubtful. It is true that his judgment may be weak and blundering, but it is his, and his only one. A man has not two judgments, a good and a bad one, and if he use his one instrument or faculty as well as he can, his errors will surely be forgiven. If its fallibility were an argument against the use of reason, man could reason on no subject. But it is better to use a dim light than none at all. If a man assert the *impossibility* of any interpo-

* See D'Israeli's *Curiosities of Literature*.

lated matter still existing in the Scriptures, he then exercises his right of judgment in so deciding ; while the believer in the *possibility*, also exercises his, though in a contrary direction. It is a difference of opinion. Who shall decide ?

The canonical authority of the Apocalypse was disputed by Martin Luther, and maintained by Dr. Mill. Both parties exercised the same right of private judgment. The Apocryphal books were rejected on the private judgment of many Christians ; but the Council of Trent insisted upon their authenticity, and denounced the divine wrath against all who should reject them. May not all men lay claim to the same right of judgment which was exercised on the one side by the majority of Christians, and on the other by the Council of Trent ? To suppose that men could, even if they wished it, form any belief wholly independent of their own judgment, is absurd. The same freedom of opinion ought to be contended for in politics as in religion ; for what is human life without freedom, both of mind and body ? Indeed, all men, *if they will*, may have liberty of thought, but they should also enjoy the liberty to give it utterance

SONG.

THE sun is up—but feebly still
 He throws his yellow beam ;
 The gray mist shrouds the distant hill,
 And floats along the stream.

The fluttering lark hangs on the air,
 And pours his matin lay,
 While Mirth and rosy Health repair
 To greet the rising day.

The forest branches slowly wave
 Where sport the zephyrs coy,
 And Echo, from her hollow cave,
 Repeats each note of joy.

The light airs cool my fevered brow,
 And pain and care depart,
 For Nature's holy radiance now
 Hath flashed upon my heart !

THE DAY OF LIFE

I.

OH ! blue were the mountains,
 And gorgeous the trees,
 And stainless the fountains,
 And pleasant the breeze ;
 A glory adorning
 The wanderer's way,
 In life's sunny morning,
 When young Hope was gay !

II.

The blue hills are shrouded,
 The groves are o'ercast,
 The bright streams are clouded,
 The breeze is a blast ;
 The light hath departed
 The dull noon of Life,
 And Hope timid-hearted,
 Hath fled from the strife !

III.

In fear and in sadness,
 Poor sports of the storm,
 Whose shadow and madness
 Enshroud and deform ;
 Ere Life's day is closing
 How fondly we crave
 The dreamless reposing—
 The calm of the grave.

SONNET—TO NETLEY ABBEY.

ROMANTIC ruin ! who could gaze on thee
 Untouched by tender thoughts, and glimmering dreams
 Of long-departed years ? Lo ! nature seems
 Accordant with thy silent majesty !
 The far blue hills—the smooth reposing sea—
 The lonely forest—the meandering streams—
 The farewell summer sun, whose mellowed beams
 Illume thine ivied halls, and tinge each tree,
 Whose green arms round thee cling—the balmy air—
 The stainless vault above, that cloud or storm
 'Tis hard to deem will ever more deform—
 The season's countless graces,—all appear
 To thy calm beauty ministrant and form
 A scene to peace and meditation dear !

ON THE ART OF READING.

I pray you to mar no more of my verses with reading them ill-favourably.

As You Like it.

I WAS lately dipping into "A Catalogue of Five Hundred celebrated Living Authors of Great Britain,"* published in 1788, and on coming to the article on Anna Seward, was struck with the singularity of one of the points of commendation. She is described as "a lady of considerable accomplishments, beautiful in her person, lively and entertaining in her conversation, and *celebrated for her great excellence in the art of reading.*" The mention of Miss Seward's poetry follows as a secondary matter; and indeed if she had not read poetry better than she wrote it, she would scarcely have merited such particular praise. Not that her poetry was invariably bad. Some of her sonnets have both beauty of thought and harmony of metre, though I fear that the world will "willingly let them die." In fact they are almost forgotten already. There are lines in them, however, that deserve to live. The following is an example. It finely represents the heat and stillness of a summer noon:—

And sultry silence brooded o'er the hills.

The following stanza on the dog in a wild state, is taken from her poem on the "Future existence of brutes:—"

When unattached, and yet to man unknown,
Wolfish and wild, the wilderness he roves,
Bays with his horrid howl, the silent moon,
And stalks the terror of the desert groves.

The following couplet is pretty and picturesque:—

And tossing the green sea-weed o'er and o'er
Creeps the hushed billow on the shelly shore.

Her description of a winter morning is extremely true:—

I love to rise ere gleams the tardy light,
Winter's pale dawn:—and as warm fires illume
And cheerful tapers shine around the room,
Through misty windows bend my musing sight,
Where, round the dusky lawn, the mansions white,
With shutters closed, peer faintly through the gloom,
That slow recedes, while yon gray spires assume,
Rising from their dark pile, an added height
By indistinctness given.

Miss Seward's poetry is sometimes florid and affected, and a great deal more attention seems paid to the words

* I have a vague recollection that Lord Byron once noticed and laughed at this book, being much amused at the notion of their being at any time in our country 600 celebrated living writers.

than to the ideas. She was admired, however, as a poetess and esteemed as a friend by Darwin and Hayley, and even Sir Walter Scott and the learned Dr. Parr. Sir Egerton Brydges fancies that the hand of Darwin is to be traced in many of her early poems. I think not. She was too self-satisfied to receive such assistance. The querulous and passionate strain of her correspondence with Henry Hardinge, who occasionally ventured to suggest improvements in her verses and to differ with her on certain points of poetical criticism, shows that she was not easily led by the advice or influenced by the judgment of others. Darwin, in fact, is more indebted to her than she was to him, for he is known to have used some lines of her composition in the introduction to his "Botanic Garden," and that without any acknowledgment.

As to Miss Seward's posthumous letters, which in obedience to her last will were edited by Sir Walter Scott, they are certainly the most artificial compositions of the kind in the English language, though they are at the same time amongst the most amusing, on account of their poetical criticisms and their literary anecdotes.

Nothing, however, can be more ludicrous than her extravagant admiration of the circle of Lilliputian poets, by whom she was surrounded. I do not allude to Hayley and Darwin, for though now out of fashion, they were really eminent men in their day; but to that little clan of versifiers, whose very names are now forgotten, though their productions, according to Anna's friendly predictions, were to last with the language. It was because Hardinge would not admire these sprats of Helicon that she was so exasperated at what she called his want of candour. What most surprises us, in the midst of her violent eulogies, is the quickness and accuracy of her microscopic eye in picking out the minutest beauties of these small writers. It is true that she always exaggerates the value of her discoveries to a most unconscionable extent; but she exhibits at the same time the nicest judgment in selection. If a critic of the severest taste were compelled to praise the same writers, he would inevitably fix upon the same passages for commendation. This seems to show extreme partiality rather than a want of critical acumen. Many of her remarks upon Milton are exceedingly judicious, and she enthusiastically maintained his claim to be considered a richly harmonious poet, when it was the fashion to pronounce his versification harsh and displeasing.

Miss Seward's success as a reader argues her possession of great delicacy of ear and quickness of apprehension, for without these qualities it is impossible she could have recited

orators do not read other kinds of poetry so well as they read the Drama. They are too much inclined to *act*. Quin, however, was an exception. He is said to have read Milton with "marvellous propriety." Joseph Fawcett also was a beautiful general reader. *Hazlitt* tells us that his repeating some parts of *Comus* with his fine, deep, mellow-toned voice, particularly the lines, "I have oft heard my mother Circe, with the Syrens three," &c., and the enthusiastic comments he made afterwards, were a treat to the ear and to the soul. Henderson was a splendid reader; according to the testimony of Boaden, his reading was superior to that of Kemble or Mrs. Siddons.

A good reader may even blind us to the faults of an author by the charm of his delivery. Spence, on the authority of Richardson, tells us that "Mr. Hooke read some speeches of his Roman History to the Speaker Onslow (who piqued himself upon his own reading), and begged him to give his opinion of the work: the Speaker answered in a passion, he could not tell what to think of it; it might be nonsense for aught he knew; for that his manner of reading had bewitched him."

It is said that Sir James Mackintosh was a fine reader; though from the harshness of his voice, I should not have supposed it. I have been told that one day in a large party at Hyderabad, on some person depreciating Cowley, Sir James took down the book from a shelf in the room, and saying that he was sure the gentleman could not have sufficiently studied that poet, he read the "*Chronicle*," in a style that enchanted his audience. Perhaps his truth of emphasis and feeling overcame the disadvantage of a bad voice.

Though good poets are not *necessarily* good readers of verse, and I have given the names of several who illustrate the observation, I still think that the best readers amongst the poets must recite their own compositions or those of their brethren with a peculiar *gusto* and a magical effect. It is said that Virgil, Racine, and Boileau were admirable readers. Nat Lee was particularly distinguished for the beauty of his recitation. "He was so pathetic a reader of his own scenes," says Cibber, "that while he was reading to Major Mohun at a rehearsal, Mohun, in the warmth of his admiration, threw down his part, and said, 'unless I were able to

ful when worthily expressed by that divinest of all instruments—the human voice. In the case of Mrs. Siddons, we are to recollect that that Queen of Actresses was on her own strong ground in dramatic poetry, and that the sympathies and associations of the audience were naturally most at her command, when she was uttering the words of Shakespeare.

play it as well as you read it, to what purpose should I undertake it?*

Mr. De Quincey (the Opium Eater) gives an interesting account of Charles Lamb as a reader; and in speaking of his own habits, says, that at one period during illness he could not read to himself with any pleasure, yet that he sometimes read aloud for the pleasure of others, for reading was an *accomplishment* of his, "almost the only one he possessed," and if he was proud of any thing it was of this, because he had observed that no accomplishment was so rare. He describes Charles Lamb as a delightful reader of verse, though his style of recitation wanted force, and was better suited to passages of quiet or solemn movement than to those of tumultuous passion. But the management of his pauses, it is added, was judicious, his enunciation distinct, his tones melodious, and his cadences well executed. This praise may excite some surprise, because it has been said that Lamb stammered even more in reading than in speaking. Amongst the best readers of modern times was Dr. Sayers, of whom William Taylor of Norwich has written such an affectionate and interesting biography. "Throughout life," says his biographer, "he was one of the finest readers ever heard; expression of every kind was at his command; his own emotion was always transitive, yet given with that subdued grace, which is the expedient distinction between lecture and declamation." Mr. Polwhele (in his *Traditions and Recollections*) records that Dr. Wolcot (Peter Pindar) read poetry extremely well. He remembers the Doctor's reading some lines "with a voice so plaintively soft, so musical in its cadences, that his whole soul should seem to have been attuned to sensibility and virtue. But what a medley is man of good and evil!"

Wordsworth's reading of his own poetry is described by Hazlitt as particularly imposing. "In his favorite passages his eye beams with preternatural lustre, and the meaning labours slowly up from his swelling breast." Mrs. Hemans, in a letter to a friend, also gives a pleasing account of Words-

* Cowley, in speaking of Ben Jonson, says, "I must not forget Ben's reading,—it is delicious. Never was poetry married to more exquisite music. His voice is deep, solemn, and harmonious; his accent and emphasis learned and precise, without pedantry. We may apply to him the eulogy he gave us of his friend, Lord Verulam—that the hearer is afraid to cough or look aside, and our only fear is lest he should make an end," (from a letter to Wm. Harvey, published in *Fraser's Magazine*, April, 1836.)

Jonson's proficiency in the art of reading was well known. "I never heard any man," says the Duchess of Newcastle, "read well but my husband; and I have heard him say he never heard any man read well but Ben Jonson, and yet he hath heard many in his time." Aubrey says that Jonson was a bad actor, but a good instructor.

worth's style of recitation. "His reading is very peculiar, but, to my ear, delightful; slow, solemn, *earnest* in expression, more than any I have ever heard; when he reads or recites in the open air, his deep and rich tones seem to proceed from a spirit-voice, and to belong to the religion of the place: they harmonize so fitly with the thrilling tones of woods and waterfalls." Coleridge was also a fine reader. The reporter of the poet's Table Talk mentions that upon his telling him, that he did not very well recollect the Prothalamion of Spenser, "Then I must read you a bit of it, said Coleridge, and fetching the book from the next room, he recited the whole of it in his finest manner. "I particularly bear in mind," continues the reporter (the poet's relative) "the sensible diversity of tone and rhythm with which he gave the concluding line of each of the strophes of the poem:

Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.

Talfourd, in his life of Lamb, tells us that Coleridge was sometimes induced to recite portions of "Christabel," "then enshrined in manuscript from eyes profane;" and that he gave "a bewitching effect to its wizard lines." "But more peculiarly beautiful than this," continues Talfourd, "was his recitation of Kubla-Khan. As he repeated the passage:—

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she play'd
Singing of Mount Abora—

his voice seemed to mount and melt into air as the images grew more visionary, and the suggested associations more remote."

Hazlitt tells us that "there was a *chaunt* in the recitation both of Coleridge and Wordsworth, which acts as a spell upon the hearer, and disarms the judgment. Perhaps they have deceived themselves by making habitual use of this ambiguous accompaniment. Coleridge's manner is more fully animated and varied; Wordsworth's more equable, sustained and internal. The one might be termed more *dramatic*, the other more *lyrical*."

Very little attention is paid at the generality of schools to accuracy and variety of emphasis and cadence. The consequence is that few persons, even amongst those who have received what is called an elegant education, are able to read either prose or verse with propriety and effect. Most readers hurry over the finest prose composition like a paragraph in a newspaper, as if they had no time to spare; or turn poetry into prose by a cold and careless intonation, or by harsh and erroneous accents. Faults in prose-reading, however, though

more easily avoided, are far less disgusting than in the recitation of verse. Even so early as the time of Elizabeth, the poets used to complain of the manner in which their works were recited. Beaumont, in his lines to Fletcher on the failure of his "Faithful Shepherd," speaks with impatient contempt of bad readers of verse:

"Of those—
Whose very reading makes verse senseless prose."

The first and most important requisite for excellence in reading, is a thorough comprehension of the author's meaning; for unless we fully understand his sentiment or intention, it is impossible to give the right tone and cadence. The slightest error in these respects has such a serious effect, that a writer is quite at the mercy of his reader. A greater punishment to a poet could hardly be conceived than that of making him listen to his own compositions inaccurately or untastefully recited.* I have never met with more than two or three individuals in private life who could read an ode or an elegy in a style that was not absolutely offensive.

The two most common though opposite faults in the reading of verse are a disregard of those fine harmonies which distinguish verse from prose, and a whine or chaunt. These are the Scylla and Charybdis of recitation. To avoid these dangers requires the nicest art—the utmost delicacy of taste. The reader who can succeed in this difficult task, and keep precisely the right tone, accent, and emphasis, and preserve at the same time an air of ease and freedom in the management of his voice, must be no ordinary person. Such excellence is not a mere mechanical accomplishment. It not only requires something of the perseverance of a Demosthenes, but many personal and intellectual qualities of a rare and brilliant order.

The rules for reading verse are so unsettled, that many points of considerable importance must be left entirely to the taste and feeling of the reciter. It is not, for instance, yet agreed amongst the teachers of elocution, whether or not a slight pause should be made at the end of every line of blank verse just sufficient to mark its limits. Dr. Lowth, Mr.

* "I laugh heartily," says Owen Feltham (in his *Resolves*), "at Philoxenus's jest, who passing by and hearing some masons mis-sensing his lines, (with their ignorant sawing of them,) falls to breaking again. They ask the cause, and he replies, they spoil his work, and he theirs. Certainly a worthy poet is so far from being a fool, that there is some wit required in him that shall be able to read him well; and without the true accent, numbered poetry does lose of the gloss. It was a speech becoming an able poet of our own, when a lord read his verses crookedly, and he beseeched His Lordship not to murder him in his own lines, 'He that speaks false Latin breaks Priscian's head; but he that repeats a verse all puts Homer out of joint.'"

Garrick, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Blair, and Mr. Sheridan are in favour of this pause; Walker and others are against it. I am inclined to agree with the former, that there ought to be a very slight, and except to a fine ear, a scarcely perceptible pause of suspension at the end of every line, whether of rhymed or blank verse; but it should seem, if I may say so, more like a link than a break in the chain of harmony.

If any one is asked a second time to read aloud by any number of persons of good taste whom he has no reason to suppose are inclined to flatter him, he may congratulate himself upon the possession of a very rare and delightful accomplishment. For my own part I repeat, that I have heard very few persons, in private life, attempt to read poetry aloud who did not either irritate their auditors or lull them into an untimely slumber. I have met with more persons who knew how to write poetry, than who knew how to read it. They who have been present at poetical readings in private parties know what a wearisome trial of courtesy it is to keep up an air of attention. The eyes begin to close in spite of one's politeness, and to make those "pictures when they're shut" of which Coleridge speaks; while, like the waves on the sea-shore, as described by Shelley, the reader's voice breathes over the slumbering brain a dull monotony. That Anna Seward deserved her reputation as a fine reader is sufficiently evident from the circumstance of her having been so frequently solicited to read Shakespeare and Milton aloud to different companies, that at last the task was beyond her strength. One evening, from reading all the principal scenes in *Macbeth*, she found herself so much injured, that as she assured her friends, she never breathed freely afterwards.

Mr. Southey, in the preface to his *Madoc*, in the new edition of his poems, has made the following complimentary mention of Miss Seward, with which I shall conclude the present article:—"Sir Walter Scott has estimated with characteristic skill Miss Seward's powers of criticism and her strong prepossessions on literary points. And believing that the more she was known the more she would have been esteemed and admired, I bear a willing testimony to her accomplishments and her genius, to her generous disposition, her frankness, her sincerity, and warmth of heart."

EVENING.

I.

Oh ! sweet is the hour
 When low in the west,
 The sun gilds the bower
 Where fond lovers rest,
 Then gorgeously bright,
 Beneath the blue stream,
 In garments of light,
 Departs like a dream !

II.

Oh ! sweet and serene
 The spell that beguiles,
 When night's gentle queen
 More tenderly smiles !
 The boldest are coy—
 The wildest are grave—
 The sad feel a joy
 Loud mirth never gave !

III.

The spirits of love,
 To hallow the time,
 From regions above
 Pour music sublime ;
 Their harmonies cheer
 The mystical night,
 And steal on the ear
 Of dreaming delight !

SONNET—AN ENGLISH LANDSCAPE.

THE land ne'er smiled beneath a lovelier day,
 So rich is every light, so soft each shadow !
 How brightly beautiful this sun-lit meadow !
 How merrily the small rills o'er it stray,
 While on their daisied sides sweet children play !
 With songs of birds the fragrant groves are ringing—
 Neath cottage eaves the village maids are singing,
 And blend their artless songs with laughter gay ;—
 A herdsman old in yonder shade reposes ;
 And kine, knee-deep in pasture, feed at pleasure.
 Oh ! fairer far than Persia's fields of roses
 Is this calm scene, that memory long shall treasure ;—
 Elysian landscape ! ere life's vision closes
 May this worn heart *here* taste luxurious leisure.

R. P. GILLIES.

"Memoirs of a Literary Veteran, including Sketches and Anecdotes of the most distinguished literary characters from 1794 to 1849. By R. P. Gillies. In 3 volumes."

To a reader partial to literary gossip, a book of this kind is far more entertaining than a novel. It is not only more entertaining but more instructive, and the ever present feeling that it is not a baseless fiction but a chapter from real life, gives a zest to the interest with which we read it.

Mr. Gillies is a man of genius, a poet, and a linguist. He is best known to the public as the originator and editor of the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, but he was well esteemed in literary circles long before he commenced his labours upon that publication. He was born, according to the vulgar phrase, with a silver spoon in his mouth, which he soon exchanged for a leaden one. His father who had passed sixteen years in this country, during the times of Earl Cornwallis and Warren Hastings, when fortunes were more easily made than they are now, left the autobiographer a handsome estate in Scotland. The son was bred up to the law, but he hated the profession, and "penned a stanza" when he should have "engrossed." He was not only fond of literature but of literary society, and had early in the list of his friends and acquaintances such men as Walter Scott, Dugald Stewart, Brown, Southey, Wordsworth, and Sir Egerton Brydges, Thomas Campbell, Wilson, De Quincey, the Ettrick Shepherd, Maginn, Rogers, and Sir James Mackintosh. His book is enriched with interesting private letters from some of these distinguished characters.

Gillies seems to have understood how to enjoy money, but not how to keep it. He soon lost his patrimonial estate and became involved in pecuniary difficulties. He had to struggle hard to keep up any sort of home, however humble. At last he seems to have become familiar with prisons, while his poor wife had to battle unsupported with the world. Yet he had not wanted friends. Scott, before his own distresses tied his generous hand, offered him a house to live in, as well as pecuniary assistance, but the offer was gratefully declined, and Gillies went up to London without a stiver, but contrived with the assistance of Messrs. Treuttel and Würtz to bring out the *Foreign Quarterly Review*.

Gillies, as editor of the review, had £600 per annum for his trouble, but he was to pay for contributions out of his own salary. He never failed in literary industry, though he was evidently deficient in prudence. In some cases he wrote a whole number

of the work with his own hand. He had sedulously studied Continental literature, and the success of his translations from the German, published in *Blackwood's Magazine*, many years before, gave him confidence and a name. His Review was for a time successful beyond his most sanguine hopes, but a Mr. Fraser, from being a contributor, became a rival, and set up a new work called the *Foreign Review*. This competition led to incessant warfare, interrupted attention to the main business of both publications, and divided the public patronage. At last, however, the new work sank, and the original publication recovered its lost ground. But somehow or other Gillies, instead of rising out of his own personal difficulties, gradually got deeper and deeper into the mire, until the patience and the pockets of his friends were quite exhausted. Frequent arrests eventually interfered so seriously with his duties as an editor, that he was obliged to resign the management of the Review. What his condition now is we cannot say, but we presume the present work is an attempt to *raise the wind*. We should rejoice to hear that this accomplished gentleman has a prospect of passing the winter of life in some degree of comfort. He is surely a fit subject for the generous consideration of the projectors of the New Guild of Literature.

Mr. Gillies has the proud distinction of being the subject of one of Wordsworth's sonnets :—

From the dark chamber of dejection freed,
Spurning the unprofitable yoke of care,
Rise, Gillies, rise : the gales of youth shall bear
Thy genius forward like a winged steed.
Though bold Bellerophon (so Jove decreed
In wrath) fell headlong from the fields of air,
Yet a rich guerdon waits on minds that dare,
If ought be in them of immortal seed,
And reason govern that audacious flight
Which heaven-ward they direct.—Then droop not thou,
Erroneously renewing a sad vow
In the low dell mid Roslin's faded grove ;
A cheerful life is what the Muses love,
A soaring spirit is their prime delight.

In spite of his misfortunes, Mr. Gillies has not led an altogether unhappy life. He has enjoyed intimate social intercourse with some of the first spirits of the age, and they who have had a taste of that pleasure will gratefully acknowledge what a relish it imparts to human life. It is not that literary men in general are very animated personages in a large and mixed company or very acceptable or happy guests at grand dinner parties ; but in the snug little parlour or study—at the winter hearth, or in the open fields in summer under blue skies—in a *tête-à-tête*, or in a very small familiar party—they are almost always delightful associates.

In mixed society, the deep thinker, indeed, is often regarded as a *nonentity* or a *bore*. He is there unsociable and consequently unpopular.

It is natural enough that an unsociable person should be unpopular ; but it is by no means generally the case that the bashful and reserved, especially when intellectually gifted, are deficient in the kindlier feelings. Quite the reverse. Men of great practical acuteness and admirable good sense, and extensive knowledge and much general ability, often take a lead in society and feel themselves thoroughly at their ease amongst all sorts of people. But this is not the case, we think, with the thoughtful and sensitive man of genius. Except amongst natures like his own, he feels out of his element.* To every rule, indeed, there are exceptions. Burns and Hogg were jovial and companionable men, and Walter Scott won golden opinions from all sorts of men by his easy familiarity and delightful gossip. After all, however, even these men were not quite so much exceptions to the rule as they might appear to be. Though Burns and Hogg were easy and unreserved over the bottle and in the festal hour, and were then *hail fellows well met* with all men, they were less at home in general society when the whiskey was not in them. Addison, of whose social powers Pope has spoken so highly, was only "a parson in a tie wig" until he had half emptied his bottle. Burns was not sorry to get away from the fine society of Edinburgh, in which his jealous pride was continually receiving some painful shock ; and the Ettrick Shepherd could only feel himself comfortable in the presence either of men who openly confessed his genius or who knew not what genius meant. As to Scott, his powers were of the narrative and garrulous order. He was the prince of gossips and anecdote-mongers, and more of a man of business and detail than any other equally gifted spirit of modern times. Deep thought and exquisite sensibility were not the prime characteristics of his nature, and seem rarely, if ever, to have given the tone to his conversation. His talk was the talk of a man of the world. He was always, how

* "Society and genius," says Lord Byron, "are incompatible, and the latter can rarely, if ever, be in close or frequent contact with the former without degenerating ; it is otherwise with wit and talent, which are excited and brought into play by the friction of society which polishes and sharpens both.

"Those who have once accustomed themselves to think and reflect deeply in solitude, will soon begin to find society irksome ; the small money of conversation will appear insignificant, after the weighty metal of thought to which they have been used, and like the man who was exposed to the evils of poverty while in possession of one of the largest diamonds in the world, which, from its size, could find no purchaser, such a man will find himself in society unable to change his lofty and profound thoughts into the conventional small-talk of those who surround him."—*Conversations of Lord Byron with the Countess of Blessington.*

ever, thoroughly sincere and fine tempered. He had extraordinary sagacity and unlimited benevolence, and as he esteemed the daily affairs of life of far more importance than the finest visions of the poet, and never looked upon success in literature as amongst the proudest of earthly distinctions, he gave up his whole soul to his immediate companions, and the passing hour. He was never rendered unfit for the widest social intercourse by self-involvement and

Those thoughts that wander through eternity.

Wordsworth, on the contrary, was uneasy in any society which could not speak of the *Excursion*. Coleridge would always talk enough—often indeed more than enough;—for he never seemed to trouble himself with a consideration of time, or place, or person, and dilated on poetry and metaphysics to utilitarians and dunces. He spoke monologues only. He “lived on the sound of his own voice.” There was no dialogue where Coleridge reigned. His audience gave up all attempt to wedge in a single word. They listened as to a professed lecturer. He was like a man in a dream, who has, of course, all the talk to himself, and invents satisfactory replies.

Mr. Gillies repeats with great emphasis throughout his volumes his conviction, that almost all men of profound genius are remarkable for an unaffected simplicity of character and manner. He is very right. Even Scott, with all his practical experience of human life, was charmingly easy and unpretending in personal intercourse. But *his* simplicity was the simplicity of a more than ordinary portion of sound common sense. Coleridge’s simplicity was of a very different nature. So was Goldsmith’s. The simplicity of profound thoughtfulness, and refined sensibility, though always amiable, is too often gull-like. In the busy or gay world, men, thus richly endowed, may be “led by the nose as asses are.” And the consciousness of their child-like weakness in the vulgar affairs of life often produces that shyness and timidity which shallow observers regard as sullen pride and a coldness of nature.

But poets and literary men are not reserved through pride or coldness. No class of men love their fellow-creatures more cordially than they do. But they are painfully sensible of their want of worldly experience, and always fancy that in general society, the full and earnest discussion of their favorite topics would be deemed an intolerable nuisance. They are under a sad restraint. They feel tongue-tied. They cannot speak about what their hearts are full of without the fear of being set down as egotists or pedants. Yet the mere man of the world, who is so puzzled to account for the apparent stupidity and uneasy reserve of the deep scholar, is in much the

same state of discomfort in the presence of a circle of philosophers and poets, as these last are in the brilliant drawing-room and saloon. For really cordial intercourse there must be an interchange of congenial thoughts and feelings. It is true that a man of genius and deep reflection may amuse himself for a time with contemplating those scenes of life in which he cannot take an active share, and look even upon a fool or a fop as a curiosity ; but he soon gets tired of this sort of occupation and longs to escape from the frivolities of common talk to the society of kindred beings—alive or dead—his living literary associates, or the great master spirits of past ages, who yet charm and instruct the student with their immortal voices in “still low accents breathing from” their books. Cowper in describing the feelings of sensitive and bashful men gives us some of the traits of genius :—

The visit paid, with ecstasy we come,
As from a seven years' transportation, home,
And there resume an unembarrassed brow
Recovering, what we lost we know not how,
The faculties that seemed reduced to nought,
Expression and the privilege of thought.

The man of genius is almost always a warm-hearted friend, however silent and reserved in general society. His affections are concentrated in his own home—in his own dear domestic circle. He who has gained admittance there will not long complain of his coldness. But it is painful to see a man of profound thought and sensibility in a fashionable assembly. He is alone in the crowd. He looks as if he would be right glad to escape. This was the case with Hazlitt, and yet when he was with only two or three congenial spirits, he was the life of the company.

SONNET—WRITTEN IN A LADY'S ALBUM.

THE page is laid before me, and a voice
That none could well resist, its soft command
Is breathing in my ear ;—my ready hand
Obeys, and proudly would my soul rejoice
If the coy Muse were subject to my call
As I to thine ; but, Lady, happier bards
Than he who now would claim thy kind regards,
Oft vainly at her sacred altars fall.
Her mood is changeful ever, and her dreams
May mock the mental eye. As brief as bright,
O'er life's dim land they flash their floods of light,
To leave a denser gloom. The steady beams
Of small dull stars shine through the weary night,
While fitfully the Muse's lightning gleams.

CHRISTMAS.

[WRITTEN IN INDIA ON CHRISTMAS DAY.]

HERE is CHRISTMAS DAY again ! There is something as animating in the mere announcement as in the sound of a merry bell. It is the season of cheerful piety, of the renewal of old customs that keep the heart alive and tender, and of pure and child-like enjoyment. In our native land it is a time when the dreariness of out-of-doors' nature heightens and concentrates the social pleasures and affections within the sheltered home. The hard ground and the frozen sheets of water remain unthawed by the pale and sickly sun ; but the heart of man melts within him, and the fountain of love is unlocked. The huge Christmas fire is the blazing sun that now warms and illumines each domestic circle. How beautifully its red light tinges every object in the snug apartment, and flashes on cheerful faces that glow as beneath the fervour of summer skies ! There is no winter within domestic walls.

Now do the most busy and bustling of men of business pause for a few pleasant hours in their quick career, and casting off all feverish anxiety for the future, abandon themselves wholly to present pleasure, or dwell with a serene and grateful tenderness on the joys of the long-vanished past. The stern pride of philosophy and the zeal of the worshipper of Mammon are suspended for a day. The heart has an undivided reign over the kindlier and purer elements of our nature. Now friends long separated, and scattered over different corners of the kingdom, are re-called to one common centre, and surround the hearth that once echoed to the peals of their boyish laughter. The happy patriarch of the family gathers around him again the forms that he cherished in their cradles, and during their youth, but whom the cares and duties of manhood have drawn from the paternal roof. The day is sacred to the affections. The goddess of domestic love demands the entire man. The Christmas hearth is a shrine at which tender recollections, charity and forgiveness, and social feeling and a gentle joy, are the only acceptable offerings. On this day especially does

The inviolate island of the sage and free,
notwithstanding its ' cold and cloudy clime,'* deserve the title

* It was Charles the Second, I believe, and not Charles the First, as stated on page 254, who defended the climate of England and said that that was the best climate to which men might expose themselves with impunity the greatest number of hours in the day. On page 137 there is a slip of the pen or an error of the press, which makes the court of " Charles I." ring with Butler's witty couplets. We meant to refer to the court of Charles II.

of *Merry England*. The very streets of her dingy metropolis look bright with gay garments and happy faces. The churches are decorated with sparkling holly, and sprigs of evergreen are in every window. With ponderous cakes, a rich mass of sweets, whose sugary coats rival in their brilliancy the snow upon the hills, and with the gigantic roast beef of old England, almost every table in the land is groaning. Even the poor man's heart is gladdened. The toil-worn mechanic and the humble cottager have for this day at least clean clothes and a substantial meal, and a cheerful fire, and a merry meeting of their unsophisticated associates. With a smiling air, and a hurried yet careful tread, they rush from the busy bake-house with their earthen dish of beef and potatoes that scents the atmosphere as they pass along. What an appetite-provoking sight and savour! The school-boy will not "whine" to-day, nor creep, like a snail, unwillingly to his task. This long looked-for day is to him, as to many others, the happiest of the year. His head has been as full of confectionary visions as his stomach will now be of the substantial reality. There is such a contagious merriment around, that the adult who does not feel like a boy again, is not fit to be a man. Every generous spirit abandons itself to the influence and character of the season.

And all is conscience and tender heart.

It is sad to recollect that we in this far land are excluded from so many of these simple but true enjoyments. All we can now do is to enjoy the memory of them.

A sound-headed man, however, cannot but be something of a cosmopolite and optimist. Wherever there are human hearts, there are social feelings! and even in solitude, where external nature is not excluded by prison doors, there is always beauty: and God is every where. He leaves no corner of the world, no class of his creatures, utterly forlorn and fatherless. Why then should we be guilty of an impious discontent, and recal the past, rather to feed our cares only than to revive our most pleasant feelings and associations.

A distance of fifteen thousand miles, a tropical sun, and the presence of foreign faces need not make us forgetful of home-delights. That strange magician, Fancy, who supplies so many corporeal deficiencies and mocks at time and space, enables us to pass, in the twinkling of an eye, over the dreary waste of waters that divides us from the scenes and associates of our youth. We tread again our native shore. We sit by the hospitable hearth, and listen to the laugh of children. We exchange cordial greetings and friendly gifts. There is a resurrection of the dead, and a return of vanished

years. We abandon ourselves to this sweet illusion, and again

Live o'er each scene, and be what we behold.

The warm-hearted and the imaginative cheat Time of half his triumph. The happiness of a dream is real, however false its images. To be pleasurably deceived is no great hardship. Happiness is our object, and the wise care little for the means. It is enough to know that the end is good and true, however it may have been obtained; for he who is in the enjoyment of *genuine* happiness, cannot have forfeited any right of conscience to that precious dower:—evil intentions are not thus rewarded.

If, therefore, we turn our imagination into a right path, we can hardly give it too free a rein. Let any man take a retrospect of his life, and sum up his moments of real pleasure, and he will soon discover how much he owes to this glorious faculty. It is to the freshness and fervour of imagination in the dawn of life that we are to attribute the radiance of early joy. All things sparkle in its light, like the dew-bespangled fields of morning.

Let such amongst us as are willing to be children again, if it be only for an hour, resign ourselves to the sweet enchantment that steals upon the spirit when it indulges in the memory of early and innocent enjoyment. Let us seek again each well-remembered haunt of happier years. Ah! then how many faces long since faded shall bloom again! The white shroud of winter may conceal the countenance of earth, but the shroud of mortality shall be parted. The spring of human nature shall return. The cerulean heaven of many a laughing eye shall shine as brightly and tenderly as ever,—the voice of human merriment, more sweet than the songs of birds, shall again respond to the music of the mind.

Even when this dream departs, we are not utterly forlorn. We return to this foreign shore—this distant exile—in sadness, but not despair. We have almost all of us either children or friends in our native land. Perhaps we may once again embrace them—to part no more! But should fate deny the consummation of this dearly cherished hope—should we never again re-visit “in the flesh” that happy circle—we may at least sympathize in their enjoyments. Parents, especially, have reason to hail this festive season with peculiar interest. The fireside holidays, not less delightful than the sunny noons of summer, are enjoyed by their dear little offspring with the same zest and intensity as thrilled their own hearts of yore. Their small, round, ruddy faces are illumined by the flickering light of the burning logs so liberally heaped upon the grate.

The firewood crackles cheerily, and the chesnuts are swelling and bursting on the hob with a startling sound. The glories of the hospitable board, are demolished with a spirit and celerity that maturer mouths would in vain essay to rival. The good things that go untasted from our tables in this City of Palaces, are treated with more respect by our little representatives in Britain. Even the substantial Christmas turkey disappears like a dream before the attacks of these lilliputian, but gallant, gastronomists. As the peasants in Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* wondered how the school-master's one small head could contain such a load of learning, we are puzzled to conceive how each little school-boy and school-girl stomach can make room for such enormous stores of Christmas luxuries. Dear boys—sweet girls—ye seem more provident than your age would warrant! Is it because Christmas comes but once a year that ye lay in so lavish a supply?

But there is a limit even to the appetite of healthy children, and the rich, delightful meal, interrupted only by irrepressible bursts of laughter at jests more rife with merriment than wit, like all earthly enjoyments, must have an end. It is succeeded, however, by a variety of delightful gambols. The bunch of misletoe is suspended from the ceiling, and occasions

Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks and wreathed smiles.

The little gay Lotharios and the flirts and coquettes in miniature, now present a scene that awakens a thousand exquisite recollections in the minds of the elder spectators. The boys betray a consciousness that they are doing a manly thing. The little misses think it necessary to appear coy and reluctant, yet seize sly occasions to look as *killingly* as they can at their favorites of the bolder sex, and seem to recollect, as often as it suits their inclination, that under the green misletoe kissing is lawful, and "killing, no murder."

Then follow Blind-man's-buff, Hunt-the-slipper, and a round of accustomed games. After or before all these, according to the taste of the donors, come the Christmas presents, which are received by the happy little creatures with such grateful transports, and exhibited with such innocent pride to their school-fellows when "*black Monday*" returns. The triumphant display of these treasures, and a fresh store of pocket-money, are among the parting consolations when they quit the sweet indulgences of home for the rigid laws of school.

It is true that in this strange land the celebration of Christmas can be attended with but few of those social observances, and those pleasant festivities around the blazing fire, which contrast so delightfully with the dreary aspect of

external nature during an English winter ; but though the season has lost something of its mirth, we can still keep it sacred to the memory of the past.

If we cannot collect around our festal board the forms familiar to our childhood, we can think and talk of them with tenderness and rapture. Those of us who have children in our native land may cheer ourselves with the thought, that on this long and impatiently expected holiday their little hearts will bound with merriment, and that they will be called upon, in the midst of their innocent pleasures, to remember their distant parents, to wish them many happy seasons, and perhaps, also, *a safe return to their native country*. But, alas ! I allude to the latter wish with a faint and trembling heart, when I recollect how many of our expatriated countrymen have been disappointed in this the sweetest prospect of an Indian exile's life. They cherished, perhaps, as firm and fond a hope as any that yet glows in a living breast to pass the cheerful evening of existence in some pleasure-haunted spot in dear old England—and now they are lying in their last long sleep on this foreign shore !

SONNET—TO A LADY SINGING.

O ! BREATHE, impassioned songstress, once again,
 That soul-entrancing air ! Responsive tears
 Attest thy power. Thy gentle voice appears
 Like sounds of summer's eve, or some sweet strain
 That haunts the wanderer's visionary brain
 When home's fond memories rise, and vanished years,
 That Time's dim twilight mystery endears,
 Return, like shadows o'er the trembling main
 Beneath the half-veiled moon. Then waken still
 Those notes with more than mortal music fraught—
 Celestial harmonies ! Each echo seems
 A charm from heaven—a spell divinely wrought
 To bare the curtained past, and every ill
 That clouds the heart, to cheer with holy dreams.

SONNET—THE SUTTEE.*

HER last fond wishes breathed, a farewell smile
 Is lingering on the calm unclouded brow
 Of yon deluded victim. Firmly now
 She mounts, with dauntless mien, the funeral pile
 Where lies her earthly lord. The Brahmin's guile
 Hath wrought its will—fraternal hands bestow
 The quick death-flame—the crackling embers glow—
 And flakes of hideous smoke the skies defile!
 The ruthless throng their ready aid supply,
 And pour the kindling oil. The stunning sound
 Of dissonant drums—the priest's exulting cry—
 The failing martyr's pleading voice have drowned;
 While fiercely-burning rafters fall around,
 And shroud her frame from horror's straining eye!

* I take the following lines and the note attached from Mr. Amos's "*Gems of Latin Poetry*:"—

Felix Foix SUTTEES lex funeris una maritis,
 Quos Aurora suis rubra colorat equis:
 Namque ubi mortifero jacta est fax ultima lecto,
 Uxorum positus stat pia turba comis,
 Et certamen habent leti, quæ viva sequatur
 Conjugium: pudor est non licuisse mori,
 Ardent victrices, et flammæ pectora præbent,
 Imponuntque suis ora perusta viris.

"The suppression of the practise of Suttee throughout the British dominions in India, is a victory of humanity, over national prejudices, which the most sanguine philanthropists could scarcely have deemed attainable, at least in a short time and without political convulsion. The practise still prevails out of the pale of the British authority. In an instance, known by the author, which occurred in one of the petty independent states of India, where there was an English Resident, it came to the knowledge of the Resident that a widow would shortly burn herself on the funeral pile of her husband. The Resident offered to convey her away from her husband's relatives, free of expense, and to take her to her own family or settle her in any safe place she preferred. The Rajah or Prince of the territory, performed what was in the East, a great mark of condescension, a personal visit to the widow, in order to join his entreaties to that of the Resident; and he offered to give the widow an annuity of just the same amount as the English Government chose to confer. But it was all to no purpose, the widow persisted in burning herself, alleging that the subject had often been talked of between herself and her husband, and she considered it a part of her faith to him, that their bodies should be consumed by the same fire.

It is curious that a description of Suttees should be found in Propertius from whom the Latin text is taken. There is an interesting Latin poem on the subject by the Rev. G. Booth, in the *Oxford Anthology*. Mr. Richardson, an Anglo-Indian poet, has given the following description, apparently by an eye-witness."

[The above sonnet is here alluded to.]

TRANSLATIONS FROM VIRGIL.

No ancient poet has been so frequently translated as Virgil. Nearly a hundred known writers have endeavoured to clothe either the whole or some portion of his productions in an English dress, but as yet no published translation has done him justice. Perhaps none ever will. Addison though he could write Virgilian prose, was any thing but Virgilian when he attempted poetry. He has translated only the fourth Georgic, but he has managed to crowd as much bald prose and as many false rhymes into his brief production as were ever exhibited by a poetaster of the lowest order in the same number of pages. Here are a few specimens—

For colds congeal and freeze the liquor *up*,
And melted down with heat the waxen buildings *drop*.

But let no baleful yew-tree flourish *near*
Nor rotten marshes send out steams of *mire*.

And thus they feed their young with strange *delight*
And knead the yielding wax, and work the slimy *sweet*.

Then all will hastily retreat and *fill*
The warm resounding hollow of their *cell*.

In crowds before the king's pavilion *meet*,
And boldly challenge out the foe to *fight*.

I'd show what art the gardener's toils *require*,
Why rosy Pæstum blushes twice a *year*.

For once I saw in the Tarentine *vale*
Where slow Talesus drenched the washy *soil*.

'Till into seven it multiplies its *stream*
And fattens Egypt, with a fruitful *slime*.

But these for want of room I must *omit*
And leave for future poets to *recite*.

It is strange that the man who could write in this style should have produced such a piece of poetic prose as the Vision of Mirza! His original compositions in verse are somewhat more carefully finished than his translations; but they are not much more poetical. Warton, perhaps not too severely, calls "The Campaign," a *gazette in rhyme*.

Dryden has translated Virgil vigorously, but his mind was not Virgilian. Pope and he ought to have exchanged tasks. Dryden should have taken Homer, and Pope Virgil. One of the most celebrated passages in the Georgics is the description of rural happiness, towards the end of the second

book. Our readers will, perhaps, be amused by a re-perusal of several translations of it. We first quote the original :—

O ! fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,
Agricolae ! quibus ispa procul discordibus armis,
Fundit humo facilem victum justissima tellus.
Si non ingentem foribus domus alta superbis
Mane salutantum totis vomit ætibus undam ;
Nec varios inhiant pulchra testudine postes,
Illasque auro vestes, Ephyreiaque ara ;
Alba nec Assyrio fucatur lana veneno ;
Nec casia liquidi corrumpitur usus olivi :
At secura quies, et nescia fallere vita,
Dives opum variarum : at latis otia fundis,
Speluncæ vivique lacus ; at frigida Tempe,
Mugitusque bonum, mollesque sub arbore somni
Non absunt. Illic saltus, ac lastra ferarum,
Et patiens operum, parvoque assueta juvenus ;
Sacra Deum, sanctique patres ; extrema per illos
Justitia excedens terris vestigia fecit.

The following is Dryden's version, and we have ventured to mark with *Italics* some of those words and lines which seem to us to belong much more to the translator than to the original author, or which are not very happy representations of Virgil's meaning. We shall do the same with the other translations :—

O happy if he knew his happy state,
The swain, who free from *business and debate*,
Receives his easy food from Nature's hand,
And just returns of *cultivated land* !
No palace with a lofty gate, he wants
To admit the tides of early visitants,
With eager eyes devouring as they pass,
The *breathing* figures of Corinthian brass.
No statues threaten from high pedestals ;
No Persian arras hides his homely walls
With antic vests, which through their shady fold,
Betray the streaks of ill dissembled gold .
He boasts no wool whose native white is dyed
With purple poison of Assyrian *pride* :
No *costly* drugs of Araby defile
With foreign scents the sweetness of his oil ;
But easy quiet, a secure retreat,
A harmless life that knows not how to cheat,
With home-bred plenty, the rich owner bless ;
And rural pleasures crowns his happiness.
Unwex'd with quarrels, undisturbed with noise,
The country king his peaceful realms enjoys—
Cool grots, and living lakes, the *flowery pride*,
Of meads, and streams that through the valley glide,
And shady groves that easy sleep invite,
And, after toilsome days, a soft repose at night.
Wild beasts of nature in his woods abound ;
And youth, of labour patient, plough the ground,
Inured to hardship and to homely fare.
Nor venerable age is wanting there,
In great examples to the youthful train ;
Nor are the gods adored with rites profane.
From hence Astræa took her flight and here
The prints of her departing steps appear.

The seventeen lines of the original are thus extended to thirty-four. Dryden's failures are usually from want of care and not from want of genius. He wrote hurriedly and for bread. Our next specimen shall be from the pen of Dr. Joseph Warton, who wrote the elegant Essay on Pope, which introduced a new tone into poetical criticism. We like his criticism better than his poetry. His brother Thomas Warton was more favored by the Muse and wrote some sonnets which Hazlitt thought the best in the language. In the following passage we have twenty-six lines for the original seventeen :—

Thrice happy swains ; *whom genuine pleasures bless,*
 If they but knew *and felt* their happiness ;
 From wars and discord far, *and public strife,*
 Earth with salubrious food supports their life ;
 Tho' high-arch'd domes, *tho' marble halls* they want,
 And columns cased in gold and elephant,
In awful ranks where brazen statues stand,
The polish'd works of Grecia's skilful hand ;
 Nor *dazzling* palace view, whose portals proud
 Each morning vomit out the cringing crowd ;
 Nor wear the tissued garment's cumb'rous pride,
 Nor seek *soft* wool in Syrian purple dyed
 Nor *with fantastic luxury* defile
 The native *sweetness of the* liquid oil ;
 Yet calm content, secure from guilty cares,
 Yet home-felt pleasure, peace, and rest, are theirs,
 Leisure and ease, in groves and cooling vales,
 Grottoes and babbling brooks and darksome dales ;
 The lowing oxen, *and the bleating sheep,*
 And under branching trees delicious sleep !
 There forests, lawns, and haunts of beasts abound,
 There youth is temperate, and laborious found ;
 There altars and the righteous gods are fear'd,
 And aged sires by dutious sons rever'd,
 There Justice linger'd ere she fled mankind,
 And left some traces of her reign behind.

The following is given in the preface to Davidson's Virgil and is signed B. It is one of the most prosaic versions that we have yet met with :—

O ! happy Swains ! did they their bliss but know
 To whom the Earth released from all the woe
 Of civil broils, gives us with lib'ral hand
 An easy plenty *at their just demand,*
 What if no lofty pile, *with haughty towers,*
 A *waving* throng through ev'ry passage pours
 Of humble waiters in the morning hours :
 What if no tortoise-scales incrusting wood,
 Nor Corinth's brass amaze the gaping crowd,
 If no brocaded hangings dress the room,
 Nor Tyrian purple stain the *milk-white loom*
 Nor Cassia taint pure oil *with strong perfume,*
 Yet fraudless Innocence, and peaceful rest,
 Unbounded plains, with endless riches blest :

Yet caves and living springs, and airy glades,
 And the soft low of kine, and sleepy shades,
 Are never wanting : There wild herds abound, }
 And youth inur'd to toil and thrift are found, }
 And aged Sires rever'd, and Altars crown'd :
 There Justice left, when she forsook mankind,
 The last impressions of her steps behind.

As the last is one of the most prosaic translations of this passage that we have seen, we give the following as one of the happiest. It is by Sotheby, and combines spirit and fidelity with a rare success. It exceeds the original in point of length by only three lines :—

Ah ! happy swains ! *ah race below'd of heaven !*
 If known thy bliss, *how great the blessing given !*
 For thee just earth from her prolific beds
 Far from wild war spontaneous nurture sheds,
 Though nor high domes through all their portals wide
 Each morn disgorge the flatterer's reflux tide ;
 Though nor thy gaze on gem-wrought columns rest,
 The brazen bust, and gold embroidered vest ;
 Nor poisoning Tyre thy snowy fleeces soil,
 Nor cassia taint thy uncorrupted oil ;
 Yet peace is thine, and life that knows no change,
 And various wealth in Nature's boundless range,
 The grot, the living fount, the umbrageous glade,
 And sleep on banks of moss beneath the shade ;
 Thine, all of tame and wild in lawn and field,
 That pastur'd plains or savage woodlands yield :
 Content and patience youth's long toils assuage,
 Repose and reverence tend declining age :
 There Gods yet dwell, and, as she fled mankind,
 There Justice left her last lone trace behind.*

The following is from Elton's *Specimens of the Classic Poets*. This also deserves considerable praise. Upon the whole it is a closer translation than Sotheby's, though less

* We took this translation at second hand from an old number of the *Edinburgh Review*. Soon after this article, containing our own version and that of Sotheby, both exactly in their present state, had appeared in the *Calcutta Literary Gazette*, we discovered that Sotheby had considerably altered his. It is right to notice this fact, because one or two of the later expressions in Sotheby's version are much nearer than his first to those in our own version. The following are the lines and words subsequently introduced into Sotheby's version :—

- 3rd line. Too blest if conscious of the blessing given—
- 4th „ Far from wild war spontaneous *plenty* sheds—
- 7th „ Though nor thy gaze on *tortoise* columns rest—
- 8th „ The *Ephyrean* brass and gold wrought vest—
- 14th „ And *lowing* herds and *sleep* in *soothing* shade—
- 19th „ There *hallowed* shrines ; and as she fled mankind—

poetical.* It has so few variations from the original that they are not worth noticing :—

Oh peasants, far too blest ! if only this
 Were theirs, the simple knowledge of their bliss !
 Far from the din of arms, earth's foodful soil,
 With easy nutriment repays their toil.
 Though not, at morn, their mansions' portals proud
 Wide disembody the ebbing flatterer crowd ;
 No pillars, chased with shells, they rapt behold ;
 Busts of fine brass, nor arras wrought with gold :
 Though their white wool no Syrian venom paint,
 And their pure oil no foreign perfumes taint ;
 Yet, rich in various wealth, the peasant knows
 A life ingenuous, and a safe repose.
 Calm fields, fresh dells, grots, limpid lakes, the breeze
 Echoing with herds, and slumbers bower'd with trees.
 Here beasts of chase the lawn or forest range ;
 Youth, train'd to little, toils, nor sighs for change ;
 All to the Gods a solemn reverence pay,
 And holy shine the locks of silver gray ;
 Here Justice linger'd, this her last retreat ;
 Here left the print of her departing feet.

Thomson in his *Seasons*, has imitated or rather paraphrased this description :—

Oh ! knew he but his happiness, of men
 The happiest he ! who far from public rage,
 Deep in the vale, with a choice few retired,
 Drinks the pure pleasures of the rural life.
 What though the dome be wanting, whose proud gate,
 Each morning, vomits out the sneaking crowd
 Of flatterers false, and in their turn abused ?
 Vile intercourse ! What though the glittering robe
 Of every hue, reflected light can give
 Or floating loose, or stiff with mazy gold,
 The pride and gaze of fools oppress him not ?

* * * *

Sure peace is his, a solid life, estranged
 To disappointment, and fallacious hope :
 Rich in content, in Nature's bounty rich ;
 In herbs and fruits ; &c.

It is very difficult to preserve the line between what is too literal and what is too free in translation, but Sotheby appears to have hit that happy medium more frequently than any of his predecessors. We do not imply a very strong objection to every word or passage *italicised* in the foregoing extracts, (though some of them might be justly condemned,) nor do we mean that all that is not italicised is correct or happy. We have marked them merely with the view of attracting the

* Dryden in one of his prefaces gives a painful account of a translator's difficulties :—" He who invents is master of his thoughts and words ; he can turn them and vary them as he pleases, till he renders them harmonious. But the wretched translator has no such privilege ; for being tied to thoughts, he must make what music he can in the expression ; and for this reason he cannot always be so sweet as the original."

reader's attention more readily to the comparative closeness or license of the different translations. That those who may be offended at the freedom of some of our remarks upon our betters, may have a glorious opportunity of revenging themselves, we shall be so indiscreetly generous as to subjoin a translation of our own. Milbourne was styled by Pope, the fairest of critics, because he exhibited his own version of Virgil to be compared with Dryden's.

RURAL HAPPINESS.

Ah ! happy Swains ! if they their bliss but knew,
Whom, far from boisterous war, Earth's bosom true
With easy food supplies. If they behold
No lofty dome its gorgeous gates unfold
And pour at morn from all its chambers wide
Of flattering visitants the mighty tide ;
Nor gaze on beauteous columns richly wrought,
Or tissue robes, or busts from Corinth brought ;
Nor their white wool with Tyrian poison soil,
Nor taint with Cassia's bark their native oil ;
Yet peace is theirs ; a life true bliss that yields ;
And various wealth ; leisure mid ample fields,
Grottoes, and living lakes, and vallies green,
And lowing herds ; and 'neath a sylvan screen
Delicious slumbers. There the lawn and cave
With beasts of chace abound. The young ne'er crave
A prouder lot ; their patient toil is cheered ;
Their gods are worshipped, and their sires revered ;
And there when Justice passed from earth away
She left the latest traces of her sway.

We must acknowledge that it is somewhat too bold in us to attempt a translation of any part of Virgil after Sotheby, whose version is generally considered the best that has yet appeared. But as we are giving so many old translations of this passage in the Georgics, we think it as well to add one new one. Sotheby evidently aimed at great closeness. We have endeavoured to be equally faithful and to compress the translation into as few lines. That there are some few coincidences of expression between Sotheby's version and ours, we do not deny, and certainly do not wish to conceal, as must be evident from our giving the reader an opportunity to compare them ; but these coincidences are not, we hope, more than ought to be reasonably expected under the circumstances. We had Sotheby's translation before us and did not reject any word that was faithful to the original, merely because he had used it first. It would be almost impossible for one writer to translate after another (*both aiming at fidelity and using the same metre*) to avoid a few similarities of expression. The occurrence of a similar rhyme we did not for a moment think it worth our while to guard against. The word *oil* is a final word or rhyme in Dryden's version of the same passage, and in Warton's,

Elton's, Sotheby's, Cowley's and our own. Warton's, David-son's and Sotheby's conclude with—" *mankind*" and " *be-kind*." Such coincidences in translation are not accounted proofs of plagiarism. Dryden translated Virgil two or three years after the appearance of Addison's version of the fourth Georgic, but no one accused him of plagiarism, notwithstanding the number of such rhyme-echoes as the following :—

First for your bees a proper station *find*
That's fenced about and sheltered from the *wind* ;
For winds divert them in their flight, and *drive*
The swarms, when loaded homeward, from their *hive*.

Addison.

First, for thy bees a quiet station *find*
And lodge them under covert of the *wind* ;
(For winds,) when homeward they return, will *drive*
The loaded carriers from their evening *hive*.

Dryden.

Dryden remarks, that after Addison's " *bees his own swarm is hardly worth the hiving*." The public have only smiled at this undeserved compliment to a writer who, when he attempted poetry, exhibited such a remarkable want of that grace, feeling and fancy, which are so conspicuous in his prose.

We had almost forgotten Cowley's translation of Virgil's description of rural happiness. We insert it here. It will be seen that it is very far from being either a close or an elegant translation. It is of the same length as Warton's—twenty-six lines.

Oh ! happy (if his happiness he knows)
The country swain, on whom kind heaven bestows
At home all riches, that wise nature needs ;
Whom the just earth with easy plenty feeds !
'Tis true, no morning tide of clients comes,
And fills the painted channels of his rooms,
Adoring the rich figures as they pass,
In tapestry wrought, or cut in living brass ;
Nor is his wool superfluously dyed
With the dear poison of Assyrian pride ;
Nor do Arabian perfumes vainly spoil
The native use and sweetness of his oil.
Instead of these, his calm and harmless life,
Free from th' alarms of fear, and storms of strife,
Does with substantial blessedness abound,
And the soft wings of peace cover him round :
Through artless grots the murmuring waters glide ;
Thick trees both against heat and cold provide,
From whence the birds salute him ; and his ground ;
With lowing herds, and bleating sheep does sound,
And all the rivers, and the forests nigh,
Both food and game and exercise supply.
Here a well-hardened, active youth we see

Taught the great art of cheerful poverty,
 Here in this place alone, there still do shine
 Some streaks of love both human and divine ;
 From hence Astræa took her flight, and here
 Still her last footsteps upon earth appear.

Dryden did not deem it necessary for his own fame to differ very widely from some parts of this version, though neither he nor Cowley are very rigidly faithful to the original. The first line of Dryden's concluding couplet is word for word with Cowley's, and the rhymes are the same.

Observe also the fourth couplet in both versions, and the rather remarkable expression of Assyrian *pride* (for Assyrian *poison*.)

In translation, a few such similarities, especially *when they are close to the original*, ought not to be regarded as either surprising or unlawful. It will be observed that Cowley has translated *magitusque boum*, "*lowing herds*." In Sotheby's first edition of his translation, he did not give an exact translation of these words, but he afterwards introduced the *lowing herds*. Ought we to suspect him of having copied Cowley? Certainly not. While translating the passage in which they occur, we had seen neither Cowley's nor Sotheby's "*lowing herds*," and yet we also gave "*lowing herds*."

Here is a blank-verse translation by a Mr. Deare. Though it is a pretty close one, and he has avoided the severe perplexities of rhyme, it is two lines longer than Sotheby's :—

Ah ! but too happy, if they knew their bliss,
 Are husbandmen ; for whom the righteous earth,
 Far from discordant arms, pours forth her stores
 Of ready sustenance. What, if for them
 No lofty mansion from its ample porch
 Vomits each morn a sycophantic tide ;
 What, if no decorated columns move
 The admiring crowd ; no broider'd gold disguise
 Their simple vests, nor Grecian vase for them
 Project its graceful form ; no Tyrian dye
 Their spotless wool, nor vitiating use
 Of eastern perfume taint their wholesome oil ?
 Yet rest secure, and life that ne'er deceives ;
 Rich in the *various wealth* of wide domains ;
 Caves and the *living lake* ; yet cooling vales
 And *lowing herds* and shaded slumbers sweet
 Are theirs : for them the woodland glade expands ;
 Theirs are the pleasures of the chase ; a youth
 Of labour patient and of frugal fare :
 Theirs the pure altar ; theirs old age revered :
 Leaving 'mongst them her vestiges extreme,
 Departing justice fled the haunts of men.

Here are the same words—*various wealth*—*living lake*¹ and *lowing herds*, that are in Sotheby's last version and in our own, and yet we fell in with this sometime after we

had written our own or seen Sotheby's. Is it in any degree wonderful that we should all three have been equally faithful in translating the same words from the original?

Here is a translation of this famous passage, from the pen of Edmund Burko in his sixteenth year.

Oh ! happy swains ! did they know how to prize
The many blessings rural life supplies
When in safe huts from clattering arms afar
The pomp of cities and the din of war,
Indulgent Earth, to pay his laboring hand
Pours in his arms the blessings of the land ;
Calm through the valley flows along his life,
He knows no changes as he knows no strife.
What though no marble portals, rooms of state
Vomit the cringing torrent from the gate ;
Though no proud purple hang his stately halls
Nor lives the breathing brass along his walls,
Though the sheep clothe him without colour's aid
Nor seeks he foreign luxury from trade,
Yet peace and honesty adorn his days
With rural riches and a life of ease.*

Joyous the yell'wing fields where Ceres sees
Her blushing clusters bend the groaning trees ;
Here spreads the silver lake and all around
Perpetual green and flowers adorn the ground.
How happy too the peaceful rustic lies,
The grass his bed, his canopy the skies,†
From heat retiring to the noontide glade
His trees protect him with an ample shade.
No jarring sounds invade his settling breast,
His lowing cows shall lull him into rest.
Here 'mong the caves, the woods, the rocks around,
Here, only here, the hardy youth abound,
Religion here has fixed her pure abodes,
Parents are honored, and adored the gods ;
Departing Justice when she fled mankind
In these blest plains her footsteps left behind.

These lines are much too paraphrastic, but are quoted as a curiosity. They do no discredit, however, to Burke's boyhood, though Mr. Prior goes too far in their praise and betrays the usual partiality and extravagance of an editor when he tells us that "in many passages they might contest the palm with Dryden."

We add one more translation. It is from Stawell's *Georgics* :—

Ah ! knew the swains the good their fortune yields,
Ye more than blest who cultivate the fields !
To whom the earth, away from factious arms,
Pours forth her bounty from o'er-grateful farms :

* This Irish rhyme of *ease* (ase) reminds us of Goldsmith's objection to *hey* as a rhyme to *be*. He thought it a good joke in a public criticism of a couplet thus ending, to say, "Let *hey* be called *hee* and then it rhymes with *be*."

† Burke had probably Pope's line in his mind's ear—

My footstool, earth, my canopy, the skies.

What though with them no dome from portal proud
 Disgorge each morn the adulating crowd ;
 Nor gape they for the speckled tortoise' shade,
 To swell the splendours of the rich arcade,
 Or brazen vases of Corinthian mould,
 Or garments stiffened with delusive gold !
 The snowy fleeces of the simple swain
 Reject the tincture of the Tyrian stain ;
 Nor Cassia from an aromatic soil
 Corrupts the uses of their native oil :
 But tranquil hours beyond the reach of fear,
 Resources varied, and a life sincere :
 But spacious farms that ease and comfort give,
 The grottoes cool, and fount whose waters live ;
 The oxen lowing through the breezy glade,
 And slumbers soft beneath the arbour's shade ;
 They want not : coverts of the woodland lair,
 A patient youth, with little pleased, are there ;
 There parents honoured, and revered the Gods,—
 With them fair Justice fixed her last abodes.

A careful comparison of the versions that we have collected from so many different quarters may afford an hour's agreeable occupation to the classical reader.

SONNET.

SCENE ON THE GANGES.

THE shades of evening veil the lofty spires
 Of proud Benares' fanes ! A thickening haze
 Hangs o'er the stream. The weary boatman raise
 Along the dusky shore their crimson fires
 That tinge the circling groups. Now hope inspires
 Yon Hindoo maid, whose heart true passion sways,
 To launch on Gunga's flood the glimmering rays
 Of Love's frail lamp,—but, lo ! the light expires !
 Alas ! what sudden sorrow fills her breast !
 No charm of life remains. Her tears deplore
 An absent lover's doom, and never more
 Shall hope's sweet vision yield her spirit rest !
 The cold wave quenched the flame—an omen dread
 The maiden dares not question ;—*he is dead !*

SCRAPS ; OR, ODDS AND ENDS OF CRITICISM ON
SOME OF THE BRITISH POETS.*

GEOFFREY CHAUCER,

Born 1328—Died 1400. *Reigns—Edward III. Richard II. Henry IV.*

ENGLAND owes to the father of her poetry

“A debt immense of endless gratitude,”

Chaucer did that for the English language which Dante† did for the Italian—he taught the most polite of his countrymen to speak and write it without a blush for its vulgarity or imperfection. From the Norman conquest, all our authors of any celebrity or genius had written in French or Latin, and the Anglo-Saxon was banished not only from courts but from schools. Gower, who had little or no genius, but much learning and many accomplishments, had probably neither the courage nor the inclination, and certainly he had not the power, to originate a revolution in the literature of his country. It was very late before he even ventured to follow the example of his noble rival. Chaucer began to write English poetry at the age of eighteen, and Gower at the age of sixty. Chaucer found a congenial associate in Wyckliffe, the Reformer, who translated the Bible into the vulgar tongue, and thereby helped the cause of literature as well as that of religion. Wyckliffe was warmly supported by Chaucer’s patron, the Duke of Lancaster.

Chaucer’s first considerable poem was *The Court of Love*, which was written in 1346, the year of the Battle of Cressy,—his last and best productions were *The Canterbury Tales*, which, as they were written when he was upwards of sixty, may be referred to as a satisfactory illustration of the freshness of fancy that may be preserved in a green old age.‡ Unhappily *The Canterbury Tales* were left unfinished: the number of tales contemplated by the poet is said to have been 60, of which we have only 24. Dryden

* These fragments of criticism are chiefly taken from my “Biographical and Critical Notices of the British Poets,” published in one volume small octavo, by Messrs. Lepage and Co. of Calcutta. I have confined my extracts from that volume to the critical portion exclusively.

† Dante died seven years before the birth of Chaucer.

‡ Dryden wrote his admirable versions of Chaucer and Boccaccio in his 67th year.

and Pope have both modernized some of these tales, and the former has paid a glowing tribute of praise to the genius of the patriarch of British poets. He observes in his preface to the Fables that "as (Chaucer) is the father of English poetry, so he holds him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans, Virgil." Wordsworth, Leigh Hunt, R. H. Horne, and other living poets have attempted to revive the popularity of Chaucer by translating his tales into the language of the present day. An edition of a portion of the poet's works was published in 1835 by Charles Cowden Clarke, in which the spelling only is modernized. It is entitled the *Riches of Chaucer*.

It is impossible to peruse the works of Chaucer without forming a lively idea of the author's shrewd sagacity, his quick powers of observation, and the serenity of his temper. He generally looks at all objects from a cheerful point of view, and he seems to describe human enjoyment and the brightest aspects of life and nature with a peculiar zest. His forte perhaps is broad humour, but he has sometimes a pathos that goes at once to the heart. The Clerke's Tale of the patient Grisilde is one of the most pathetic fictions in the language.

Chaucer has no puzzling metaphysics in his verses none of that subtlety or remoteness so anxiously aimed at by the poets of the nineteenth century. His poetry is simple and direct. It is also highly dramatic and picturesque. There is an endless variety, and great force and truth in his delineations of character, while his descriptions of external nature, particularly his morning scenes, are so exquisitely fresh and vivid, that he carries the reader into the open air.

His versification, to a modern and unpractised ear, seems harsh and rugged; but a familiarity with the ancient accent, and a due attention to what appears to be the fact that he wrote rhythmically* rather than metrically, lead a reader to the conclusion that the style of our venerable bard was by no means so unworthy of his matter as is generally supposed.

* It is still a question with critics whether Chaucer's verse was written metrically or rhythmically. Dr. Nott and Dr. Southey both maintain that it is rhythmical rather than metrical. The former indeed asserts that no poet before Surrey wrote metrically. Southey in his edition of Cowper states it as his opinion that Chaucer's verse was written on the same principle as that on which Coleridge composed his *Christabel*—'that the number of *beats* or accentuated syllables in every line should be the same, although the number of syllables themselves might vary. Verse so composed will often be strictly metrical, and because Chaucer's is frequently so, the argument has been raised that it is always so, if it be read properly according to the intention of the author.'

JOHN GOWER,

Born 1325—Died—1403. Reigns—Edward III. Richard II. Henry IV.

Gower was one of the most learned men of his time, and Chaucer seems to have greatly respected his judgment. According to Thomas Warton, the ingenious and tasteful historian of English poetry, Gower was the early guide and encourager of Chaucer's studies. The latter, however, had incomparably more intellectual power, and the student far surpassed the teacher. They publicly complimented each other. Chaucer styles his friend "the moral Gower," and the latter in his *Confessio Amantis* has made Venus remember Chaucer with admiration :—

And greet well Chaucer whan ye mete
As my disciple and poëte,
For in the flowers of his youth
In sundry wise as he well couth
Of dities and of songes glad
The which he for my sake made, &c.

Gower was not perhaps very highly gifted by nature, and suffers severely by any comparison with Chaucer, but he aided the exertions of his friend in refining his native tongue. The matter of his verses would have lost little by being transferred to prose. He was sententious and didactic, had little imagination, and was fond of details too purely literal. His learning though very extensive was also very inexact, so that his poems are full of ludicrous anachronisms. The following observations respecting Gower's learning are from Warton's History of Poetry, and well explain the cause of the pedantry observable in many of our early writers :—

"Perhaps, in estimating Gower's merit, I have pushed the notion too far, that because he shews so much learning he had no great share of natural abilities. But it should be considered that when books began to grow fashionable, and the reputation of learning conferred the highest honour, poets became ambitious of being thought scholars; and sacrificed their native powers of invention to the ostentation of displaying an extensive course of reading, and the pride of profound erudition. On this account, the minstrels of these times, who were totally uneducated, and poured forth spontaneous rhymes in obedience to the workings of nature, often exhibit more genuine strokes of passion and magnation, than the professed poets. Chaucer is an exception to this observation: whose original feelings were too strong to be suppressed by books, and whose learning was overbalanced by genius."

JOHN LYDGATE,

Born 1379—Died 1461. Reigns—Richard II. Henry IV., V., VI.

John Lydgate was a Benedictine Monk of Bury St. Edmunds. He was educated at Oxford. He was the pupil and imitator of Chaucer, and surpassed his master in mere smoothness and accuracy of versification, though he was

exceedingly inferior to him in higher and more essential qualities. He is thus alluded to by the poet Gray:—"I pretend not to set him on a level with Chaucer, but he certainly comes nearest to him of any contemporary writer I am acquainted with. His choice of expression and the smoothness of his verse far surpass both Gower and Occleve. He wanted not art in raising the more tender emotions of the mind." Very few critics have spoken so favorably as Gray has done of this writer. He is diffuse and feeble, and is falling rapidly into utter oblivion. But though he has few claims to admiration as a poet, he is said to have been an elegant scholar. He did not confine his studies to polite literature, but distinguished himself as a geometri-
cian and astronomer. Literature however was his favorite pursuit, and he opened a school in his monastery for teaching rhetoric and versification. He was a very voluminous author. Ritson attributes to him about two hundred and fifty works.

SIR THOMAS WYATT,

Born 1503—Died 1542. Reigns—Henry VII., VIII.

His poetry is differently estimated by different critics. Wood calls him "the delight of the muses and of mankind." Leland ranks him with Dante and Petrarch. His partial friend, Surrey, asserts with the exaggeration of poetry and friendship that he had

A hand that taught what might be said in rhyme,
That rest Chaucer the glory of his wit.

His poetry is not of a high order. It is sometimes elegant and ingenious, but it is generally deficient in natural feeling. In his amorous verses he shews himself too fond of the cold conceits of the Italian poets.

EARL OF SURREY,

Born 1516—Died 1547. Reign—Henry VIII.

Surrey's merits as a writer have been a good deal exaggerated from various causes. He is a light in the dreary chasm in our literature between the time of Edward the Third and that of Queen Elizabeth. He shines by contrast. The romantic fictions so long interwoven with his personal history, and his real heroism, his generous disposition, and his numerous and elegant accomplishments have all contributed to win the favour and influence the judgment of his critics. But the poetry of Surrey is more praised than read. He was, however, superior to his friend Wyatt, who, though

not an inelegant writer, scarcely deserves the name of poet, and who would have been long ago forgotten had he not been so fortunate in the time of his appearance, when in the absence of larger luminaries the smallest stars were visible. Surrey himself would have made little sensation in another age. From the time of Elizabeth to that of Anne there was not a single new edition of his poems, until in consequence of Pope's allusion to him as *the Granville of a former age*, the booksellers employed Dr. Sewell to reprint his poems together with those of Wyatt, and of a few "Uncertain Authors." The experiment was a total failure. Dr. Nott, however, nothing daunted, published in 1815, two large quarto volumes of the poems of Surrey and Wyatt, and what with memoirs and copious notes, produced a work of considerable importance to the poetical student, but of very little interest to the public.

Surrey's poems are chiefly amatory sonnets and brief lyrical pieces, and generally in imitation of Petrarch. Though occasionally marred, like all the poetry of the time, with cold and extravagant conceits, and a pedantic stiffness, they are far less affected with these vices than the poetry of most of his contemporaries, and they not unfrequently display an elegance and finish that would have done no discredit to the poets of a much later day. He was a *true* poet, though certainly not a *great* one. His translation of the 2nd and 4th books of the *Æneid* is spirited and faithful, and considering that it is the first specimen of blank verse in the English language, it must be acknowledged that he has employed that noble instrument with a tolerably successful hand. We miss, however, in Surrey's unrhymed verses that varied modulation which we are accustomed to meet with in those of later writers.

GEORGE GASCOIGNE,

Born 1536—Died 1577. Reigns—Edward III. Richard II. Henry IV.

His poetry is smooth and elegant, but without much force or originality. He has the merit, however, of having written the first *prose* comedy* in our language, entitled, *The Supposes*, a translation from Ariosto, and his tragedy entitled *Jocasta* (borrowed from Euripides) was the second of our blank verse tragedies.

* The first regular comedy in *verse* in our language was *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, written, it is supposed, by Mr. Still, afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells. It was published in 1551. It is written, chiefly in long (12 syllable) rhyming couplets.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY,

Born 1551—Died 1586. Reigns—Mary. Elizabeth.

So much has been said, and with so much eloquence, upon the character of this most accomplished man that it is difficult to find any terms of eulogy that have not been already applied to him. Thomas Campbell has very felicitously observed that "the life of Sir Philip Sidney was poetry put into action." He had "high thoughts seated in a heart of courtesy." He was looked up to by all his contemporaries as

The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword :
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion, and the mould of form,
The observed of all observers !

His poetry has no doubt been a little overrated out of a respect for the man. Still, however, it possesses intrinsic merit though not of the highest order. It is sometimes quaint and pedantic, but it is evidently the production of a refined and cultivated intellect. If Sir Philip Sidney had concentrated his powers he might have compassed some noble undertaking, but in aiming at too many accomplishments he lost the opportunity of attaining extraordinary excellence in any single art or science.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE,

Born 1562—Died 1593. Reign—Elizabeth

Marlowe's tragedies and miscellaneous poems have been reprinted in the present century, but the attempt to revive their popularity has failed. He has been compared to Shakespeare, and was much admired by Queen Elizabeth and King James the First, and by others whose praise is of far higher value in the estimation of later times. Amongst those of his contemporaries, who honored him with their applause, were Drayton and Ben Jonson. Drayton's lines in his praise are well known, but will bear repetition :—

Next Marlowe, bathéd in the Thespian springs
Had in him those brave transunary things
That the first poets had : his raptures were
All air and fire, which made his verses clear :
For that fine madness still he did retain,
Which rightly should possess a poet's brain.

Ben Jonson has spoken of Marlowe's "mighty line." Marlowe had more energy than judgment.* Energy alone

* Schlegel, in opposition to the opinion of critics in general, pronounces the verses of Marlowe to be "flowing, but without energy."

will not secure to a poet the favor of the present age, and Marlowe's productions have not very frequently any other quality to recommend them. He has occasional passages of great force and beauty, but he is a very unequal writer. He is the author of six tragedies, of which the best known are, *The Rich Jew of Malta* and *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor John Faustus*. Charles Lamb, in his *Specimens of the Dramatic Poets*, quotes an admirable passage (the Death-scene) from Marlowe's *Edward the Second*, and observes that "the reluctant pangs of abdicating royalty in Edward furnished hints which Shakespeare scarcely improved in his *Richard II.*; and the Death-scene of Marlowe's *King* moves pity and terror beyond any scene ancient or modern with which I am acquainted." If Marlowe had often written in the style which has excited the admiration of so judicious a critic, he would perhaps have had almost as many readers and commentators as Shakespeare himself; but his general character as a poet is not in keeping with the two or three fine passages which may be selected by a tasteful critic from the body of his works. His translation of the *Elegies of Ovid* was considered so grossly indecent, that in a not very delicate age it was burnt by command of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London.

EDMUND SPENSER,

Born 1553—Died 1598-9. Reigns—Mary. Elizabeth.

Spenser's *Fairy Queen* is undoubtedly and beyond all comparison his noblest production. It places him in the first rank of British poets. That it was left unfinished deducts little from its value, for no share of its merit depends upon the general plan, which even by the poet's own explanation in a letter to Raleigh, is confused and intricate in the extreme. It is a painful task to thread one's way through such labyrinthian confusion, and the exhausted reader is glad to relax his attention from the long series of obscure allusions, riddles, and double meanings to refresh his mental eye with the detached personifications which are as distinct and as richly coloured as the paintings of Rubens, and to delight his ear with the liquid melody of the verse. It would take up too much space to point out the general design of this poem, and explain the particular meaning of the several parts. It is sufficient to state that the leading purpose of the poem (though that purpose is of course not fully

carried out, as the poem was never completed) is to exhibit twelve virtues in the conduct of the same number of knights. Besides the twelve knights there is Prince Arthur (so famous in old British Legends) who is apparently the hero of the poem, who occasionally rescues them from danger, and in his own person shadows forth *Magnificence* (or magnanimity,) which virtue is deemed the perfection of all the rest. The heroine is *Gloriana* or glory—the Fairy Queen. But though in the general intention Prince Arthur personifies a single virtue, it is supposed that he is occasionally the representative of the poet's patron Sir Philip Sidney; and *Gloriana*, the sovereign of Fairy Land, is a type of Queen Elizabeth; her distinguished courtiers are often alluded to in the characters of the knights. It is not surprising that even Spenser himself should call his poem a "dark conceit," and confess that the meaning is "cloudily enwrapped in allegorical devises." It is the confusion of the design, much more perhaps than the occasional obscurity of the antique diction, that perplexes the general reader. There are few persons who are wholly insensible to the extraordinary force and beauty of the personifications of the passions, the accurate and vivid descriptions of nature, and the exquisite music of the versification, though there are still fewer who can go regularly forward from one canto to another without a sense of weariness. But if Spenser's narrative is uninteresting he makes ample amends by those delightful passages in which he displays the richness of his imagination and his delicate sense of beauty. He is emphatically the poet's poet.* His favorite stanza, which has been called after his name, was borrowed from the Italian, with the exception of the ninth line, which gives it a majestic volubility, and a completeness of sound that are a perfect luxury to the ear. Later writers have imparted to this stanza greater force, freedom, and variety of modulation, but in mellifluous sweetness the Spenserian measure from the hands of its first master remains unrivalled.

* "After reading," said Pope, "a Canto of Spenser two or three days ago to an old lady, between 70 and 80 years of age, she said that I had been showing her a gallery of pictures. I don't know how it is, but she said very right. There is something in Spenser that pleases one as strongly in old age as in youth. I read the *Fairie Queene*, when I was twelve with infinite delight; and I think it gave me as much, when I read it over about a year or two ago."—*Spenser's Anecdotes*. Leigh Hunt following up this hint from the old lady, has selected a number of pictorial passages from the *Fairy Queene* calling them "a gallery of pictures from Spenser," and by his subtle comments, his exquisite poetical taste, and a fine sympathetic feeling for the characteristic excellencies of a sister art, has "thrown a rich light as from a painted window" upon the poet's creations.

GEORGE PEELE,

Died 1598. Reign—Elizabeth.

Peele was a shareholder with Shakespeare in the Blackfriar's Theatre. Mr. Dyce has published an edition of Peele's dramatic works, and to justify the adventure has quoted Campbell's warm commendation of Peele's genius. According to Campbell, Peele's *David and Bethsabe* is "the earliest fountain of pathos and harmony, that can be traced in our dramatic poetry. His fancy is rich and his feeling tender, and his conceptions of dramatic character have no inconsiderable mixture of solid veracity and ideal beauty. There is no such sweetness of versification and imagery to be found in our blank-verse anterior to Shakespeare's." Mr. Hallam concurs with Mr. Collier in thinking these praises excessive. "Peele," says Mr. Hallam, "had some command of imagery, but in every other quality it seems to me that he had scarcely any claim to honour; and I doubt if there are three lines together in any of his plays that could be mistaken for Shakespeare's. His *Edward I.* is a gross tissue of absurdity, with some facility of language, but nothing truly good." Even Charles Lamb, who is sometimes a little too partial to the old Dramatists, gives but one extract in the specimens of English Dramatic Poets from Peele (from *David and Bethsabe*) to which he appends the remark that "There is more of the same stuff, but I suppose the reader has a surfeit." Campbell supports his praise with quotations from the same play!

Who shall decide when Doctors disagree?

Peele's dramatic blank-verse perhaps scarcely deserves the name, as there is no variety in the pauses. The monotony of the measure makes the reader regret the absence of rhymes.

JAMES SHIRLEY,

Born 1596—Died 1606. Reigns—Mary. Elizabeth. James I.

This dramatic writer, says Charles Lamb, "was the last of a great race, all of whom spoke nearly the same language, and had a set of moral feelings and notions in common. A new language and quite a new turn of tragic and comic interest came in with the Restoration." Shirley was born in London, and was educated for the Church, but Archbishop Laud refused to ordain him because he had a mole upon his left cheek which greatly disfigured him. An edition of his plays by Gifford has recalled public attention to this writer. He is an elegant writer, and is more select in the choice of his sub-

jects than most of his immediate predecessors, but he exhibits also less of that power and originality, which characterize our best English Dramatists.

THOMAS SACKVILLE (EARL OF DORSET),

Born 1536—Died 1608. Reigns—Henry VIII. Edward VI. Mary. Elizabeth. James I.

Sackville's *Gorboduc* subsequently entitled *Ferrex and Porrex* is the earliest English tragedy. It was first exhibited in the Great Hall of the Inner Temple before the author's fellow-students, and afterwards before Queen Elizabeth at Whitehall in 1561. It displays but little dramatic talent, and has more rhetoric than poetry. The speeches are long and tedious. But notwithstanding these defects it is an extraordinary performance for the time, the diction being singularly pure and perspicuous, and free from those wretched conceits and quibbles which found their way into the pages of his immediate successors, who with more genius had less taste. Pope was particularly pleased with this old play, and persuaded Spence to prepare an elegant edition of it which was published in 1736.

The poem by which he is best known is his induction to *A Mirrour for Magistrates*, a work which is thought in its plan and character to bear a resemblance to the *Inferno* of Dante. It was intended to embody a series of narratives respecting the most illustrious and unfortunate characters in English History, who were to pass in review before the poet who descends into Hell under the guidance of Sorrow. Sackville, however, only completed the Induction and one of the stories, that of Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham. It was continued very imperfectly by other writers. The Induction, which is remarkable for the power of fancy it displays, is undoubtedly a noble evidence of Sackville's poetical genius. Its bold and vivid allegories seem to have made a strong impression upon the mind of Spenser, who has paid him the compliment of imitation.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,

Born 1564—Died 1616. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I.

To speak of Shakespeare's genius in a manner at all worthy of the subject, would require unrivalled critical acumen and powers of expression almost equal to his own. In the small space which is allotted to these notices his excellencies must rather be alluded to than analyzed. That he is the first in

the first rank of poets is now almost universally admitted. Even the French who were at one time disinclined to acknowledge the pre-eminence of a writer whose style is so directly opposed to the general character of their own literature, begin to regard him with a liberal and enlightened admiration, and the fine enthusiasm with which his plays are now received in Germany is a proof that the English are not blinded by national pride in their estimate of his genius. The best and most laudatory of his critics is a German,—the brilliant and able Schlegel.

That Shakespeare was not a faultless writer may be admitted without much reluctance, because with all his wondrous endowments he was still a man, and no human production has yet resembled a sun without a spot. His defects, however, though numerous, are generally of a superficial and unimportant character. He who studies mankind and observes the appearances of the external world, when he comes to the perusal of Shakespeare, must be struck with wonder at the intuitive sagacity of his moral discoveries, and the unrivalled truth and force and beauty of his descriptions. There is something almost super-human in the precision with which he reads the innermost secrets of our nature. He lays bare the heart. He is the poet of the world. His true and inimitable delineations of humanity are not confined to particular times or countries, and his fame and influence are accordingly independent of those varieties and changes of circumstance and external manners which at last throw into oblivion all those writers who exhaust their powers on local or temporary materials.

It has been well observed that Shakespeare was not, like other poets, remarkable for some solitary perfection or for one predominant quality. His vast mind was well balanced and many-sided. He was not distinguished for wit alone, or humour, or pathos, or sublimity, or a vigorous understanding, or a fine imagination. He combined *all* these different qualities in his individual genius; and every other poet, however eminently endowed with one particular quality, has been surpassed even in that quality by Shakespeare.

That different readers should have different conceptions of the same characters as delineated by this dramatist has seemed to certain critics an argument against their truth. The case is the reverse. The conflicting criticisms respecting Shakespeare's characters only increase our admiration of that unrivalled dramatic power which enabled him so entirely to forget himself—to enter into the hearts of others—and to portray men exactly as they are, with all their inconsistencies, both real and apparent. To understand them thoroughly we

must study them as we study the living world. We must often too, consult our own hearts. Shakespeare's characters are not described, they act. They are not allegorical portraits—or personifications of the passions. They are not automata or lay figures. They move and breathe. The characters in the plays of those writers who possess not the dramatic faculty (however capable of expressing their own feelings) are by no means difficult of comprehension. Not being persons but descriptions, he who runs may read them. They are like caricatures with labels in their mouths, or paintings with written explanations.

Superficial observers see not that the human character is of "a mingled yarn." They discover only the broader traits unqualified by those nice gradations and varieties of shade, those virtues that border upon vice, and those vices that lean to virtue's side which are often so mysteriously blended in the same human being. This ignorance of our nature is sometimes the cause of the instability of friendship. The common crowd know but of two characters in the world—a good man and a wicked man. When they discover a single vice or failing in one whom they had placed in the former class, they instantly transfer him to the latter. They generally add to this injustice by attributing their mistake to the culprit's hypocrisy, instead of to their own want of discernment.

We are told by Collins, in a compliment to Fletcher, at the expense of a greater poet, that

"Stronger Shakspeare felt for *man* alone."

Even Dryden has expressed a similar opinion, and Walter Scott echoes him. Some living critics too, have remarked, that the female characters in Shakespeare's plays are less prominently marked and less variously distinguished than those of the sterner sex. If this criticism is to be taken in an unfavorable sense, it is quite erroneous, and the censure might be very fairly turned into a compliment. We often hear objections made to certain characters in Shakespeare's plays that only tend to shew more unequivocally the perfect truth and nature of the poet's delineations; and the criticism, just alluded to, is of this description. If Shakespeare had brought out the lines of his female characters as strongly as those of the other sex, he would have been guilty of an error into which he, of all men, was the least likely to be led. His knowledge of human nature was nearly infallible, indeed almost god-like; and he well knew that in spite of occasional and even striking deviations arising from original organization or accidental circumstances, the fairer and gentler half of

our kind are less individually distinguished by prominent and peculiar traits than men. Partly from their original nature and partly from the uniformity of their conventional condition, they are generally almost as like one another in the leading peculiarities of the moral and intellectual character as in the delicacy of their external conformation. The characters of men are necessarily more diversified, owing to the greater variety of positions into which they are thrown, and the many powerful excitements which stir their minds and hearts to the lowest depths. The nearly all-absorbing passion of a woman's breast is love, but, as Byron has made Julia in *Don Juan* tell us, men indulge in a variety of other emotions of equal strength :—

“ Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,
 'Tis woman's whole existence ; man may range
 The court, camp, church, the vessel, and the mart,
 Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in exchange,
 Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart,
 And few there are whom these cannot estrange ;
 Men have all these resources ; we but one,
 To love again, and be again undone.”

As all men and women are very much the creatures of circumstance, the comparative uniformity in the characters of the one and the endless variety in the characters of the other present a problem not very difficult of solution. Still, however, nature does not allow of an absolutely perfect similitude between any two living creatures. There are no two countenances in every respect alike, and still more positive is the diversity of minds. To the general eye a flock of sheep presents no distinction excepting that of size or colour, but the shepherd knows every face by its peculiar lineaments, as perfectly as a father knows the features of his children. In the same way, a profound student of human life, may often trace individual distinctions in the crowd, which escape the notice of ordinary observers. These minute and subtle traits, our great dramatic poet has shown us reflected in that mirror which he so successfully held up to nature ; but it happens that as he did not exaggerate the truth to make it palpable to the more vulgar eye, the finer distinctions which are unseen in the reality by common observers are equally unrecognized in the imitation, by common readers. Pope has told us that

“ Most women have no character at all ;”

and it is quite true that they have none whatever if that only is to be called a character which is obvious to all after a ten minutes' study or acquaintance. But what sound and sober critic will echo the smart but shallow dogma of the

leading wit of the days of Anne? We would rather go back to the time of Elizabeth, and listen to the philosophy of Shakespeare, who contradicts, by anticipation, the satirist's flippant libel upon the gentlest and fairest of all God's creatures. In the pages of the Prince of Dramatists, we meet again with many of those lovely and delightful beings whose delicate varieties of character enchant us in real life. Of Shakespeare's endless variety of male characters, it is unnecessary to speak, for even the dullest reader owns the truth and force of his portraits of men. Who that has once become acquainted with Lear and Hamlet and Macbeth, and Iago and Othello could ever forget them? When we are presented with such full-length portraits of humanity as these, so distinct and animated, we receive an impression that can never fade but with life itself. But he who wishes to keep up his acquaintance with the modern drama, must have a strong memory indeed, if he does not find it necessary to refresh it with occasional re-perusals:—

“ They all wear out of us, like forms with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors for one feast night.”

SIR WALTER RALEIGH,

Born 1552—Died 1613. Reigns—Mary. Elizabeth. James I.

Raleigh's poetry is often spirited and graceful. Spenser styles him “the summer Nightingale.”

SAMUEL DANIEL,

Born 1562—Died 1619. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I.

On the death of Spenser, Daniel was made Poet Laureate. His greatest prose work was a History of England extending to the reign of Edward the Third. He also wrote a Defence of Rhyme, which is published in Chalmers's collection of the poets.

He published several dramatic works, which have all fallen into oblivion; but some of his miscellaneous poems are still read with pleasure and instruction. His principal poem was upon a rather unfortunate subject for the Muse—“*The History of the Civil Wars between the Houses of York and Lancaster.*” The details are generally too minute, and the reader feels throughout that nothing is gained by forcing the grave materials of the annalist into the form of verse. His Sonnets and Epistles are amongst his happiest efforts, and in many of these he is elegant and pathetic. His diction is singularly pure and perspicuous. He has been

styled the Atticus of his day. He has no force or fire, but there is a chaste propriety in his sentiments and his style that honorably distinguishes him from most of his contemporaries.

JOHN CHALKHILL,

Born ——— Died ——— .

The freedom, polish, ease, and variety of the versification in Chalkhill's pastoral poem* must astonish a reader who has pinned his faith on the critical decisions of Dr. Johnson, who seemed to think all our verse was rough and barbarous until the time of Waller. The old saying "that there is nothing new under the sun" may be applied to the fact that the free heroic couplet with a variety of pause which leaves it no distinction from blank-verse but that of rhyme very lightly sounded—a form of versification, so much aimed at by Hunt, Keats, Shelley, and Barry Cornwall—is so far from being a novelty that it is nearly three hundred years old.

GILES FLETCHER,

Born 1588—Died 1623. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I.

This writer was the cousin of Fletcher, the dramatist. Giles Fletcher was educated at Cambridge for the Church. His principal poem is entitled "*Christ's Victory and Triumph in Heaven and Earth over and after Death.*" It was printed at Cambridge in 1610. It is not without pleasing passages and indications of fine genius, but upon the whole it is so tedious that the world will willingly let it die.

FRANCIS BEAUMONT AND JOHN FLETCHER,

Born 1586—Died 1616. Born 1576—Died 1625. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I.

In the plays written jointly by these celebrated literary partners, it is impossible to determine the exact share of merit due to each writer. It was generally said by their contemporaries that the wit and invention were Fletcher's, and that Beaumont, though the younger man, had more gravity and judgment, and confined himself chiefly to the serious and pathetic parts. So highly was the taste and judgment of Beaumont esteemed by Ben Jonson, who was not deficient in self-confidence, that he frequently sought his advice,

* Thealma and Clearchus.

and submitted his plays to his correction. In comedy the critics of their own day seem to have placed these writers above Shakespeare himself ; and even so late as the time of Dryden, that poet tells us “ their plays were the most pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage, two of their's being acted through the year for one of Shakespeare's or Jonson's.” In the present day, however, though their great merits are readily allowed, they do not interfere with the superior fame of Shakespeare, who now carries away the suffrages of both the critics and the people. But perhaps they stand next to him as dramatic poets, if we reject the claims of Ben Jonson, who had a larger share of learning than of genius, and gathered more from the school-room or the library than from human life. Beaumont and Fletcher exhibit a luxuriant fancy, and great richness and fluency of poetic diction ; and occasionally they show that they understood human passion ; but they seem too often to think of stage effect, and are too anxious to create surprise. They have nature in them, but they do not always trust it. Their greatest fault is a disregard for decency. Their sentiments are often immoral and their language indelicate. If it were not for these serious defects, their plays would, no doubt, still be highly popular ; for they abound in exquisite descriptions, in strokes of genuine wit, and are not without scenes and passages of true pathos.

SIR JOHN DAVIES,

Born 1570—Died 1626. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I.

His philosophical poem of *Nosce Teipsum*, written by him at the age of twenty-five, was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth. It is undoubtedly a very remarkable production ; and there is not in the English language a happier example of ingenious argumentation in verse. The illustrations are admirable, and the diction is singularly pure and easy for the period at which he wrote. In his versification he anticipated the precision and harmony of a later day.

THOMAS MIDDLETON,

Born 1570—Died 1627. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I.

The Revd. A. Dyce has lately published an edition of the dramatic works of Middleton, but they have not met with much notice. It is thought that one of Middleton's plays, “ *The Witch*,” suggested the witches in *Macbeth*, but it is doubtful which play was first written. Middleton was ap-

pointed in 1620 "City poet" of London, an office afterwards held by Ben Jonson.

MICHAEL DRAYTON,

Born 1563—Died 1631. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I. Charles I.

Drayton was a great poet in bulk, but not in spirit, and perhaps his very voluminousness throws his real powers into an unfavorable point of view. He had not sufficient energy to give animation to so large a mass. But his smaller pieces are graceful and unaffected. The diction is clear and the verse harmonious.

JOHN DONNE,

Born 1573—Died 1631. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I. Charles I.

Donne was a learned man and a vigorous writer ; but not a good poet. He was the first of the school of poets whom Dr. Johnson, in his *Life of Cowley*, styles the metaphysical poets. He has more wit and ingenuity than fancy and feeling ; and he had so bad an ear for the music of versification that no poet in the language has more miserably failed in the mechanism of his art. His metre is peculiarly harsh and crabbed. Dryden called Donne "the greatest wit of all our nation," but in this case he used the word *wit* in the old sense of *intellect* and not in the sense in which it is now used, nor even as a synonyme for the word *genius* for which it often passed even in the time of Pope. In our old writers it is a word of very vague signification. Dryden himself sometimes applied it to poetical genius.

Great wits to madness nearly are allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.

Of the general roughness of Donne's metre, every one complains, though on one or two occasions, he wrote very pleasingly as well as strongly—*strongly* he almost always wrote. Hartley Coleridge has a ludicrously descriptive line applied to Donne's stiffness of style. He says that he

"Twists iron pokers into true love knots."

EDWARD FAIRFAX,

—Died 1632. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I. Charles I.

Fairfax's translation of Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* is still deservedly admired. Collins alludes to the translator in the following well known lines :—

Prevailing poet, whose undoubting mind
Believed the magic wonders which he sung.

Of his original poetry little is known. Only one number of a series of eclogues is in print (in Mrs. Cooper's *Muses' Library*,) and that unfortunately is contemptible.

GEORGE CHAPMAN,

Born 1557—Died 1634. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I. Charles I.

Chapman was a dramatic writer, and was acquainted with Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and Marlowe. His own dramatic productions are deservedly forgotten, but his version of Homer in fourteen syllable lines is still admired by the poetical student for its strength and simplicity. Charles Lamb's praise of it in prose, and Keats's fine sonnet on his first perusal of it, have caused it to be often alluded to, though it is rarely read.

BEN JONSON,

Born 1574—Died 1637. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I. Charles I.

Jonson was the most learned of the poets of his time, and a truly vigorous writer. He 'wrote all like a man.' But his learning somewhat overlaid his natural powers, and he often translated from the ancients when he should have been studying human nature, and drawing upon the resources of his own masculine intellect. Young, the author of the *Night Thoughts*, compared him to a blind Samson, who pulled down the ruins of antiquity on his head and buried his genius beneath them. His representations of life, though equally spirited and accurate, are too much confined to externals and conventionalisms. He does not, like Shakespeare, lift the curtain of the human heart, and describe man in general; but he delineates with infinite wit, and in the spirit of a satirist, certain whimsical peculiarities and superficial traits. When he attempts to go beyond these, to portray our inner nature, instead of introducing us to individuals of mixed emotions and desires, he personifies independent passions. His characters are then mere abstractions. His style is upon the whole harsh and unpleasing, though he has occasional passages that compel admiration, and it is clear that he always writes with a full mind. He seldom captivates us with those sparkling gems of pure poetry which are sprinkled so profusely over the pages of Shakespeare, and there is a roughness and ferocity in his satire of which that gentler and finer nature was incapable. These remarks apply exclusively to his dramas, for in his lyrical pieces there is a sprightly fancy

and occasionally a rare degree of elegance and harmony. He wrote upwards of fifty dramatic pieces of which the greater part are masques and interludes.

THOMAS CAREW,

Born 1589—Died 1639. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I. Charles I.

The neatness, sprightliness, point and ingenuity of most of Carew's poems render them deserving of even more admiration than they have obtained.

JOHN FORD,

Born 1586—Died about 1640. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I. Charles I.

John Ford was born in Devonshire and was bred to the law. Charles Lamb says, "that he was of the first order of poets," an extravagance into which the critic would not have fallen if the poet had been a living or recent writer. Does Ford rank with Shakespeare? The general reader must always make some allowance for the partiality of those critics who, vexed at the indifference or contempt with which our old authors are too generally regarded, are apt to run into a contrary extreme. Hallam, the most calm and sober critic of the day, gives a really accurate character of Ford's dramatic genius—"a considerable distance," he says, "below Massinger we may place his contemporary John Ford. In the choice of tragic subjects from obscure fictions which have to us the charm of entire novelty, they resemble each other; but in the conduct of their fable, in the delineation of their characters, each of these poets has his peculiar excellencies.—'I know,' says Gifford, 'few things more difficult to account for than the deep and lasting impression made by the more tragic portions of Ford's poetry.' He succeeds pretty well in accounting for it; the situations are awfully interesting, the distress intense, the thoughts and language becoming the expression of deep sorrow. Ford, with none of the moral beauty and elevation of Massinger, has in a much higher degree the power over tears; we sympathize even with his vicious characters, with *Giovani* and *Annabella* and *Bianca*. Love, and love in guilt or sorrow is almost exclusively the emotion he portrays; no heroic passion, no sober dignity, will be found in his tragedies."

The greatest objection to the writings of Ford is the disposition he betrays to dally with those subjects which are revolting to a healthy moral nature. He is too often "near the brink of what we hate." The interest of his tragedy of

the *Brother and Sister*, is made to turn on the crime of incest. His best play is the *Broken Heart*, from which Lamb has extracted a very solemn and pathetic scene.

PHILLIP MASSINGER,

Born 1581—Died 1640. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I. Charles I.

It is only since Dodsley's reprint of our old plays and Gifford's edition of his dramas in four volumes, that Massinger has held a high place in the esteem of the present generation. His works were so rapidly falling into oblivion, that Rowe thought it perfectly safe to turn the materials of Massinger's *Fatal Dowry* into a new play, and under the name of *The Fair Penitent* to pass it off on the public as a perfectly original production. The latter is a popular and pleasing play, but Rowe cannot be excused for suppressing all allusion to its original source. Massinger, not only suffered from the dishonesty of Rowe, but from the carelessness of Mr. Warburton, the Herald, in whose hands were no less than fifteen of his plays in manuscript. Mr. Warburton placed these treasures in the hands of an ignorant servant, and after the lapse of some years when he made an inquiry about them, he discovered that twelve of them had been destroyed by the cook who had burnt them from a motive of economy, not wishing to use more valuable paper for culinary purposes. Sixteen of Massinger's dramas are preserved in Gifford's edition of his works. The most popular of these is the *New Way to pay Old Debts*, of which the chief character, *Sir Giles Overreach*, was one of Keau's favourite and most effective parts.

Massinger is distinguished for the dignity and harmony of his verse, but excels more in description and declamation than in the art of making his characters unfold themselves. He has no wit, but he has occasional humour, and his imagery is sometimes vivid and poetical.

Mr. Monck Mason had remarked the general harmony of Massinger's versification, which he pronounced superior to that of any other writer, with the exception of the generally acknowledged monarch of the English Drama. Mr. Gifford most unreasonably objects to this exception, and asserts that rhythmical modulation is not in the list of Shakespeare's merits! He thinks that Shakespeare has been overrated, that Beaumont is as sublime, Fletcher as pathetic, and Jonson as nervous; and that *wit* is the only quality by which he is raised above all competitors! Here is a critic that would have pleased Voltaire. It would have been amusing enough if Mr. Gifford had been compelled to give a reason

of the faith that was in him. He would have afforded a strong illustration of the absurdity and presumption of a mere satirist—an acute fault-finder,

“ A word-catcher that lives on syllables,”

attempting to take the measure of such a gigantic mind as that of Shakespeare. It is not difficult to understand why a critic who counts syllables upon his fingers should prefer the verse of Massinger to that of Shakespeare. It is more uniformly smooth, correct, and regular. But it has nothing of the freedom, the variety, and expression that characterize

“ Sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy’s child
Warbling his native wood-notes wild.”

There is no occasion to underrate the real merit of Massinger’s versification. The march of his verse is noble and majestic, and his diction is singularly pure and perspicuous. The latter has quite a modern air, though written two hundred years ago. Perhaps both his metre and his diction are preferable to those of Jonson; but in neither respect does he equal Shakespeare. For though Massinger’s language and metre have fewer faults, they have also incomparably fewer beauties, and the beauties very rarely indeed compete with those of the Prince of Dramatic Poets. They have not the same irresistible enchantment. The anticipated tones of Massinger always satisfy, but never surprise or ravish us. But the wild music of Shakespeare is like that of the *Æolian* harp touched by the wandering breeze. It reminds us of the music of the genius, who, in the habit of a shepherd, appeared before Mirza on the hills of Bagdad. He had a little musical instrument in his hand. As Mirza looked towards him, the genius applied it to his lips, and began to play upon it. “*The sound of it was exceeding sweet, and wrought into a variety of tunes that were inexpressibly melodious, and altogether different from any thing I had ever heard**.” The enchanting melody of Shakespeare’s softer passages may be described in his own delightful words—

“ O it comes o’er the ear, like the sweet south
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour.”

Coleridge once remarked that he thought he might possibly catch the tone and diction of Milton, but that Shakespeare was absolutely inimitable. This was a very just and discriminating observation. We need be under no apprehen-

* Addison’s Vision of Mirza in the *Spectator*.

sion that the music of Shakespeare will ever pall upon the ear in consequence of its frequent repetition by a flock of mocking birds. It will never be said of him, as it was said of Pope, that he

“ Made a poetry a mere mechanic art,
And every warbler had his tune by heart.”

The only superiority to Shakespeare that can be discovered in Massinger, is in the greater general clearness and more sustained dignity of his language, and in the judicious abstinence from those puns and quibbles which so unhappily deform the pages of a writer who, if it were not for a few faults of this nature, would be almost too perfect for humanity.

The texture of Shakespeare's composition is sometimes most vexatiously involved, and there are riddles in his pages that still remain unsolved by the most patient and clear-headed of his commentators. These are his weightiest sins, and every school-boy can point them out for reprobation; but, as it is hardly necessary to observe, they are redeemed by a galaxy of beauties that may be sought in vain in any other region of the world of literature.

Massinger has comparatively few of those fine and unaffected strokes of nature, for which Shakespeare is so remarkable. The “*What man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows,*” addressed to Macduff, when he receives the afflicting intelligence of the destruction of his family, and endeavours to surpress and conceal his agony:—the single exclamation, “*Ha!*” in Othello, when the lightning-flash of jealousy first startles the Moor's tempestuous soul;—his “*Not a jot, not a jot,*” when Iago observes that he is moved;—the “*Pray you undo this button,*” of Lear, when his heart swells almost to bursting;—and a thousand other simple but most expressive touches of a familiar kind, are amongst the truly characteristic excellencies of Shakespeare, and are never to be found in the stately lines of Massinger. But yet, if we compare Massinger with the dramatic writers of the present day, in whom shall we find his equal? The golden age of the drama has passed away. Our present poets can paint the moods of their own minds and can write dramatic poems, but not plays. Their mirrors reflect themselves alone. They do not hold them up to nature and give the very age and body of the time, its form and pressure.

In contemplating the characters in Massinger's plays, one cannot help wondering that Gifford, notwithstanding his narrow views in criticism, should not have seen the immeasurable inferiority of Massinger to Shakespeare in all the higher attributes of genius. But the critic appears to have been so

taken up with the regularity of Massinger's plots, the accuracy of his metre, and the purity of his diction, that he overlooked every consideration of a weightier and nobler nature. If in Shakespeare there are greater faults of style, there are far fewer errors of delineation, and in the highest sense of the word, he was a more correct writer than either Massinger himself, or the learned and laborious Jonson. The faults of Shakespeare are errors of taste, and not defects of genius. Where moral or physical nature is to be represented or described; where the heart is to be touched or the imagination kindled, he rarely fails. Massinger had an intellect of great force; but, like Dryden, he had no power over the pathetic. Even his eloquence, his most characteristic merit, is the eloquence of the mind, and not of the heart.

It was more than once urged against Shakespeare by his competitors as a weighty objection, that "nature was all his art." It would have served some of these writers justly, if he had retorted that art was all their nature.

SIR JOHN SUCKLING,

Born 1608—Died 1641. Reigns—James I. Charles I.

The miscellaneous poetry of Suckling has always great ease and vivacity. His *Ballad on a Wedding* has been much and deservedly admired for its truth and nature, though it is a little injured by indecency.

FRANCIS QUARLES,

Born 1592—Died 1644. Reigns—James I. Charles I.

The poetry of Quarles is chiefly of a severely religious character, and such as ought to have gained him more favor with the Puritanical party. It was once popular, but at the Restoration the wits laughed it into neglect. His style is quaint and coarse, but here and there, amidst his dull extravagances a few pleasing images may be found. His best known publication is entitled *Divine Emblems*.

WILLIAM BROWNE,

Born 1590—Died 1645. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I. Charles I.

William Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*, are far more fresh and natural than most poems of the same kind, and well deserve to be rescued from that oblivion into which they seem to be falling. They are full of true poetical fancy, and evince a lively and just appreciation of the charms of nature.

The versification is fluent and harmonious. Though these pastorals are somewhat deficient in human interest, and are occasionally defaced with extravagant conceits, they form a store-house of rural imagery and description, and it is thought that Milton did not disdain to be indebted to Browne's now neglected pages.

Browne published his *Pastorals* in his twenty-third year. They not only display, as already intimated, great richness and originality of fancy, but a turn for observation and reflection not a little remarkable in so young a man. Pope's *Pastorals* were published in his twenty-first year, though it is said that they were written earlier. It would be an interesting task to compare minutely the eclogues of these two writers so essentially opposed in their cast of mind and born at different periods, when such opposite styles of poetry were in fashion. There is an air of greater learning in those of Pope, and of more truth and originality in those of Browne. In the former there is not a single new image, but there are many ingenious imitations of the Greek and Roman classics; in the latter there are many fresh transcripts from nature, and very few echoes of other poets. Pope is artful and elegant; Browne is natural and free. In smoothness of versification, Pope has infinitely surpassed his predecessor. Browne's merit consists in the excellence of particular passages, for there is no regularity or completeness in his design. The reader is often disgusted with his tedious minuteness, his occasional abruptness, his confusion, and his want of refinement. But his flowers of fancy are so fresh and vivid, and are thrown about in such magnificent heaps, that a genuine lover of poetry can overlook a great deal of less agreeable matter for the sake of such rare enjoyments. They who read him for his narrative or fable must always be disappointed. His embellishments, consisting chiefly of the most elaborate yet felicitous comparisons, are always more valuable than the general ground-work of his poems.

Browne made his native country—the garden of England—the scene of his pastorals. He is to be honored for his courage, his good sense and his patriotism, in breaking through the silly custom of carrying the British Muse to foreign regions in search of beauties that are nowhere more easily found than in our own delightful land.

THOMAS HEYWOOD,

— Died 1649. *Reigns—James I. Charles I.*

Our old English dramatists often assisted each other in the composition of their plays. Heywood says, he had "either

an entire hand or at least a main finger in two hundred and twenty plays." This sort of industry adds little to a man's public reputation. Lamb calls Heywood "a sort of *prose* Shakespeare." He is deficient in taste and ideality. Twenty-three only of his plays have been preserved. His best, *A Woman killed with Kindness*, has been honored with the notice of Schlegel who observes that the last scenes of it, "are truly agitating." The interest of the scenes turns on the remorse of an unfaithful wife, when her husband on the discovery of her crime treats her with generous forbearance.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND,

Born 1585—Died 1649. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I. Charles I.

Drummond was the first Scottish who wrote in pure English. His poetry is deficient in strength and originality, but it is elegant and graceful. He was a great admirer and imitator of Petrarch, and sometimes not only took a hint from the Italian poets, but translated entire passages without acknowledgment.

PHINEAS FLETCHER,

Born 1581—Died 1650. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I. Charles I.

Phineas Fletcher, brother of the author of *Christ's Victory*, was educated at Eton. His most important poem is entitled *The Purple Island*, or *The Isle of Man*. He also wrote seven *Piscatory Eclogues*. *The Purple Island* is a very extraordinary poem. It is unquestionably a work of genius, though lamentably deficient in good taste. It is a description of the anatomy of the human body, blended with allegory and metaphysics. "The conclusion" of the *Purple Island*, say Campbell, "sinks into such absurdity and adulation, that we could gladly wish the poet back again to allegorizing the bladder and kidney. In a contest about the eternal salvation of the soul, the event is decided by King James the First (at that time a sinner upon earth) descending from heaven with his treatise on the Revelation under his arm, in the form of an angel, and preceding the Omnipotent, who puts the forces of the dragon to the rout."

JOSEPH HALL,

Born 1574—Died 1656. Reigns—Elizabeth. James I. Charles I. Cromwell.

Hall's verse is voluble and energetic, and his prose, especially in his *Occasional Meditations*, is so pointed and sententious that he has been styled the *English Seneca*.

His prose works are chiefly controversies in support of the Church against the Presbyterians. His satires were written

more than half a century before his death, so also was his satirical fiction, entitled *Mundus alter et idem*, in which he "reverses the plan of Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, and characterizes the vices of existing nations."

RICHARD CRASHAW,

Born 1615—Died 1650. Reign—Charles I.

Crashaw's original verses are full of extravagant conceits; but in the midst of all their irregularities, there are unequivocal indications of true poetic genius. Some of his translations are admirable, and show an extraordinary command over the resources of the language. The well known line which has been attributed to Dryden and other poets:—

Lympha pudica Deum vidit et erubuit,
The modest water saw its God and blushed,

first appeared in a volume of Crashaw's Latin poems published in 1634.

ROBERT HERRICK,

Born 1591—Died ——. Reigns—Charles I. Commonwealth.

Some of his longer poems are unreadable, but most of his brief lyrics are remarkably sprightly, fanciful, and harmonious. Many of them are characterized by a true Anacreontic spirit. Some of his graver effusions have considerable tenderness and a fine moral tone.

ABRAHAM COWLEY,

Born 1618—Died 1667. Reigns—Charles I. Commonwealth. Charles II.

Cowley's longest poetical work is *The Davideis*, a sacred poem on the troubles of David; in four books. The plan of the work is incomplete; for he had designed to extend it to twelve books. It is a dreary task to peruse it. It has little poetical beauty, and is full of false wit and the most absurd conceits. His *Pindaric Odes* are his most celebrated productions, but they are greatly more talked of than read. Here and there they exhibit a striking thought or an ingenious fancy, but they have not much genuine fire, and the versification could hardly be worse. The most agreeable specimen of Cowley's poetical genius is the *Chronicle*. His *Anacreontics* also are extremely elegant and lively, and may still be read with pleasure. Cowley, had he trusted more to truth and nature, would have been a far greater poet, for he

was by no means deficient in imagination and feeling : but his perverted taste and diversified learning tempted him, in compliance with the fashion of the time, to seek for such extraneous ornaments as rather surprise us with their oddity than please us with their fitness. He was the best, however, of that class of writers which Johnson has not very happily styled the "Metaphysical School of Poets,"* though his able and judicious criticism upon its characteristic features in his life of Cowley, is highly interesting and instructive. Whatever may be the fate of Cowley's poetry, there can be but one opinion of his prose. It is exquisitely easy and natural, and gives us a far more just and delightful idea of the author's personal character than is communicated by his verse. His poetry is now little known to the general reader, who will seldom take the trouble to dwell upon excellencies that are thickly surrounded with defects. A new edition of his works is rarely called for. In his own day his peculiarities were popular, but no poetry will long continue to please that has more art than nature. We soon grow weary of far-fetched illustrations and cold extravagance. The poetry of Cowley had lost its attractions even in the time of Pope, who asks :—

" Who now reads Cowley ? If he pleases yet
His moral pleases, not his pointed wit.
Forgot his Epic, nay Pindaric art,
Yet still I love the language of his heart."

SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT,

Born 1605—Died 1668. *Reigns—Charles I. Commonwealth. Charles I.*

The best known of Davenant's works is a long Epic Poem entitled *Gondibert*, which has been much praised and little read. It is the production of a vigorous mind ; but with many energetic passages, it is upon the whole a tedious poem ; and though Dr. Aiken a few years ago made an attempt to recall it to public notice, it is fast sinking into oblivion.

SIR JOHN DENHAM,

Born 1615—Died 1668. *Reigns—James I. Charles I. Commonwealth. Charles II.*

The poetry of Denham has been celebrated by Pope for its strength, and Dryden, with a warmth of praise with which the present age in this case has little sympathy, calls it " A poem which for the majesty of the style is, and ever will be, the exact standard of good writing." It has certainly con-

* Perhaps Johnson took the hint of this designation from Dryden, who in speaking of Donne, says, " he affects the *Metaphysics*."

siderable freedom and vigour both of thought and expression, though it is occasionally somewhat obscure, and is deficient in the lighter graces.

GEORGE WITHER,

Born 1588—Died 1669. Reigns—James I. Charles II.

Wither's verse is often an odd compound of genuine poetry and the merest doggerel. It is said that he could make verses as fast as he could write them down—"a fatal facility," which led him to imagine that where there was no difficulty, there was much inspiration. Any one can write verses with rapidity who is convinced that he is producing poetry when the lines "clink at the end." But amidst a vast mass of carelessly measured prose set off with rhyme, Wither has occasional passages that display a fine poetic fervor. If he had less easily satisfied himself, he would have more easily satisfied his readers.

JOHN MILTON,

Born 1608—Died 1674. Reigns—James I. Charles I. Commonwealth. Charles II.

On Milton's mighty powers as a poet, it is almost needless to offer any remarks. His sublimity of conception and force of style are universally acknowledged. Even Dr. Johnson reluctantly acknowledges the strength and grandeur of the only great Epic Poet of whom our country can boast; though he betrays a perverse and ill-concealed pleasure in the discovery and exposure of the imperfections in the *Paradise Lost*, occasioned by the incongruous mixture of matter and spirit in the machinery. Milton's subject was at once the noblest and most difficult that could possibly have been selected, and whatever may be the defects of the execution, they are, generally speaking, such as could have been avoided by no human powers. Sublimity of conception was the most characteristic quality of Milton's mind, yet there are passages of profound but quiet pathos in many of his poems that touch us like the tears of a manly spirit, unused to the melting mood; and he sometimes exhibits a most delicate appreciation of the minutest beauties of external nature. Gray seems to think Milton not unequal to Shakespeare.

Nor second He that rode sublime
Upon the seraph wings of ecstasy
The secrets of the abyss to spy,
He passed the flaming bounds of place and time :
The living throne, the sapphire blaze
Where angels tremble while they gaze,
He saw :—

This is not true, though it is unpleasant to qualify our praise of either of the two great poets, of whom not England only, but the whole civilized world—all humanity indeed—has reason to be proud. The gigantic intellect of Milton is enough to make us exult in our nature, for though he is not equal to Shakespeare, he so immeasurably surpasses the great mass of his fellow creatures, that it is something for them to know that they are of the same race.

It may be a question amongst critics, whether Shakespeare has equalled Milton in his prime and characteristic excellence of *sublimity*, but of the greater extent and variety of Shakespeare's powers, it is almost universally allowed that there can be no doubt whatever. Whether there be as much sublimity of conception in the tragedy of *Macbeth* as in *Paradise Lost*, we shall not offer an opinion; but we do not hesitate to say that in knowledge of the human heart, in invention of character, in description of external nature, in imagination, in fancy, in wit, in humour, in pathos and in axiomatic wisdom, in sweetness of versification, and in variety and felicity of diction—in all this combination of varied excellencies—Shakespeare has never yet been approached, and will probably maintain his pre-eminence in all time to come.

Much has been said of the happiness of Milton's selection of a theme. No doubt it is a grand one—the grandest ever chosen by mortal man. But it would have proved a miserable failure in almost any other hands; and even the mighty Milton attempted very much more than he could perform. He attempted impossibilities. The theme is high and imposing, but it involves contradictions which no human intellect can reconcile, and though Milton's vast images often electrify us with amazement and admiration, the narrative has no continuous or exciting interest in it. Every result is anticipated. A battle in Heaven in which Omnipotence is engaged is not "a dubious battle," and can create no feeling of suspense, though Milton tries to make us imagine that the Almighty himself is not without alarm for the safety of his throne. We cannot feel the least anxiety for the fate of Omnipotence, nor for that of any angelic spirits when earthly weapons are brought against them.

For they are as the air invulnerable,
And those vain blows malicious mockery.

Though the good angels cannot receive a wound, the poet makes the spirits on Satan's side capable of pain, but not destruction, from steel weapons. This makes all contest a mere "sham," as Carlyle would call it. Michael bore a

charmed life more truly than Macbeth ; and might have told
Satan

As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air
With thy keen sword impress,

as attempt to wage effective war

Against the invulnerable *hosts* of heaven.

Satan himself, though as an immortal being, we feel it is
no question of life and death with him, receives what would
have been an ugly wound on a mortal frame from Michael's
sword, that

Deep entering, shared
All his right side.

But the ethereal substance soon closes again.

Pope, in his exquisite mock heroic of the *Rape of the Lock*
has made a ludicrous use of this idea :—

The peer now spreads the glittering torfex wide
To enclose the lock ; now joins it to divide.
E'en then before the fatal engine closed
A wretched sylph too fondly interposed :
Fate urged the sheers, and cut the sylph in twain,
But airy substance soon unites again.
The meeting points the sacred hairs discover
From the fair head for ever and for ever !

But no amount of genius could avoid imperfections and
incongruities of this nature in the vain attempt to recon-
cile spirit and matter—to picture the invisible—to describe
the unknown.

Notwithstanding the necessary defects of *Paradise Lost*,
we cannot regret that the author gave up his original idea of
selecting Prince Arthur for the hero of an Epic Poem, and
gave the preference to Satan, (for Satan, as Dryden justly said,
is the hero of *Paradise Lost* and not Adam, who is thrown
into insignificance by the majesty of a more intellectual and
energetic being). Whatever objections may be made to the
subject as including matters confessedly beyond all mortal
handling, it is impossible to conceive a theme more fitted
upon the whole for the display of Milton's peculiar powers.
With all its unconquerable difficulties, it affords abundant
opportunity for those vast and remote suggestions, and those
stupendous thoughts and images which we now call *Miltonic*.

"Shakespeare was the man," says Dryden, "who of all
modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most
comprehensive soul," and this seems now to be the *one*
opinion, not in England only, but all over Europe and Ameri-
ca. "He was a man," said Walter Scott, "of *universal geni-*
us, and from a period soon after his own era to the present

day, he has been *universally idolized*. It is difficult to compare him to any other individual." It is difficult indeed—who would stand the comparison? Even in his own day and by his own immediate rivals was his supremacy acknowledged. Sirly Ben Jonson grew enthusiastic in his praise, and elevated him "above all Greek, above all Roman fame;" "above all that insolent Greeco or haughty Rome sent forth."

—Soul of the age!

The applause ! delight ! the wonder of our stage !

Triumph my Britain ! thou hast one to show

To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe !

He was not for an age but for all time !

The later French critics speak of him with idolatrous admiration ; and the Germans are never tired of praising and translating him. He is to them, not "the genius of the British Isles," but the genius of the world. "Ever since," says Franz Horn, "ever since I have been able to think and feel, I have recognized Shakespeare as *the first amongst poets* ; the richest, the deepest, the most instructive and delightful, the most mysterious and the clearest, and to whom I devoted myself with ever new reverence and love." "We need not be astonished," observes a French critic (*Villemain*) "that amid a nation thoughtful and intellectual, Shakespeare's works should be deemed the very foundation and source of their literature." Schlegel says of him that he is "a demigod in power, a prophet in the profundity of his views, a spirit surpassing in wisdom, and transcending the lot of humanity, yet he lowers himself to mortals as if unconscious of superiority and is as artless and ingenuous as a child." Hallam observes that Shakespeare is not at the head of English literature only, but of *all* Literature. But it is idle to multiply quotations of this sort. It is sufficient to say that no eminent critic of modern times has hesitated to place Shakespeare above every other British Poet, and that the majority of votes would place him above Homer and Virgil and the Greek dramatists ; in fact above all authors, ancient or modern. Shakespeare "looked abroad into universality." Nothing was too high or too humble for him ; he studied nature in every form. His sympathies were for all living things and even the inanimate world was not dead to him. He could

Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

All praise of his many-sided genius has become trite and commonplace. One is almost ashamed to remark that Shakespeare, of all men that ever lived, was the most profoundly

versed in the profoundest of all science—the knowledge of the human heart. Every school-boy has said it. There is no intellectual attribute that has not been assigned to him by one admirer or another. It is impossible to say any thing new of him. The most ingenious critics in the world have been trying to do this for the last fifty years, but after all, they have only said what has been said before. That Milton was a mighty poet—a man of gigantic soul—who hesitates to admit? But he is not to be compared in general capacity with the “myriad-minded” Shakespeare.

Johnson speaks contemptuously of most of Milton’s smaller poems and seems to think them deplorably deficient in grace and finish. The truth is, that the critic had an ear that could take pleasure in no verses that were not countable on the fingers, and a certain mechanical exactness was to him the finest music of which verse is capable. The uniform smoothness of Waller was to him more delightful than those exquisitely varied harmonies—those Lydian airs “with many a winding bout of linked sweetness long drawn out,” which,

Take the prisoned soul
And lap it in Elysium. —————
—————Strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of death.

We find a blended sweetness and force in the diction and numbers of Milton’s smaller poems that may be looked for in vain in all other writers except Shakespeare. Milton’s heroic blank verse and Shakespeare’s dramatic verse are the best in the language of their several kinds. They are the only English poets who may be considered perfect masters of unrhymed versification, by far the most difficult form of poetical composition.

ANDREW MARVELL,

Born 1620—Died 1678. Reigns—James I. Charles I. Cromwell, Charles II.

As a poet he does not maintain a very lofty rank, but some of his pieces are tender, fanciful and harmonious. He may always be perused with some degree of pleasure; especially when the reader bears in mind his noble patriotism and inflexible integrity.

EARL OF ROCHESTER,

Born 1647—Died 1680. Reigns—Cromwell, Charles II.

His poems are generally stained with obscenity, but it cannot be denied that they are sometimes smart and clever and

remarkable for graceful gaiety and ease. Walpole calls him "a man whom the muses were fond to inspire and ashamed to avow." His well known character occasioned many prurient productions to be erroneously ascribed to him, so that his memory has been loaded with other men's sins besides his own.

SAMUEL BUTLER,

Born 1612—Died 1680. Reigns—James I. Charles I. Cromwell. Charles II.

Butler had great learning, which he made subservient to his wit. He was never at a loss for an illustration. The plan of *Hudibras* has little merit, and the poem was left unfinished : but it is wonderfully crowded with original thoughts and comical images expressed with unrivalled felicity. The odd and unexpected compound rhymes add greatly to the effect. The reader, however, gets at last dazzled and wearied with the rapid succession of brilliant witticisms, and takes more delight in two pages than in twenty. The interest is not continuous. Many of Butler's couplets, into which truth and good sense are compressed with singular power and apparent carelessness, are often repeated by people who know nothing of the great work from which they are taken ; for the temporary nature of the main subject and the obscurity of most of the allusions have so diminished its original attractions, that it cannot now be regarded as a popular composition. This is the unhappy fate of all local or temporary satires, and one cannot help lamenting that so great and original a genius, as the author of *Hudibras*, should have been employed on perishable materials.*

THOMAS OTWAY,

Born 1651—Died 1680. Reigns—Cromwell. Charles II.

Otway's chief excellence as a dramatist consists in his power over the tender affections. Few writers for the stage have drawn so many tears. Dryden, who was personally hostile to him, was often heard to say, that Otway was an

* It is a curious illustration of the fact that Butler is now often quoted but little read, that some of his couplets are repeated inaccurately by thousands. The distich

He who's convinced against his will
Is of the same opinion still

is not correctly given. This is the common misquotation. Indeed the couplet is never quoted rightly. The words in Butler are :—

He that complies against his will
Is of his own opinion still.

illiterate man ; “ but I confess,” he would add, “ that he has a power which I have not—that of moving the passions.” It cannot be denied that there is something rather coarse and vulgar in Otway’s productions regarded as literary compositions, but this defect is not observable on the stage. Even in the perusal of them in the closet, the critic is usually disarmed by an irresistible appeal to his feelings, and in the interest excited by the incidents and characters he forgets his cold objections to the author’s style. Otway’s smaller miscellaneous pieces have nothing in them that indicates the taste or feeling of a true poet. They are singularly bald and prosaic. His tragedies are the sole foundation of his fame.

EDMUND WALLER,

Born 1605—Died 1687. Reigns James I. Charles I. Cromwell. Charles II. James II.

Waller’s poetry is perhaps overrated on account of its smoothness, but English verse before Waller’s time was, by no means, in so barbarous a condition as Dr. Johnson represents it to have been. Waller’s metre is rather uniform than harmonious. It wants variety. No single line lingers on the ear, though each entire poem may be free from any palpable defect of versification. It would be difficult, however, to praise too highly the grace and ingenuity of his amatory compliments. He does not often display energy or strength of thought ; but his *Panegyric on the Protector* is a free and masculine composition. His critical opinions were of little worth. He spoke of Milton as an old blind schoolmaster, who had written a poem remarkable for nothing but its length.

CHARLES COTTON,

Born 630—Died 687. Reigns Charles I. Cromwell Charles II. James II

Cotton’s burlesque humour is often easy and happy, and there is much earnest and weighty moral sentiment in his serious pieces, but he exhibits little of the fancy or feeling of the genuine poet. He often employed himself on translations from the French, and we are indebted to him for an excellent version of the *Essays of Montaigne*. It is reported that he lost an estate of 400*l.* per annum by an unlucky allusion in his parody of Virgil, to his grandmother’s ruff. It was an expensive jest. The old lady had settled her fortune upon him, but on this provocation, she altered her will and left all she had to a stranger.

JOHN DRYDEN,

Born 1631—Died 1701. *Reigns—Charles I. Cromwell Charles II. James II. William and Mary.*

Dryden was for nearly half a century the most industrious and influential of English authors. There is a force of mind in all his productions that compels attention, even when he sins against truth and nature. He is never languid or effeminate. Every movement of his intellect, even when erroneous or ill-directed, is indicative of a fearless will and great natural power. He is one of the most manly writers that ever lived, and one of the most truly national. No poet has yet appeared, whose thoughts and expressions have a more thoroughly English aspect; and with all his faults his countrymen have abundant reason to be proud of his noble genius. He has written the best ode in the language, and the best satire. He is the father of English criticism, and takes his place in the very first rank of our prose writers. The sagacity and knowledge displayed in his critical prefaces, and their free, idiomatic, and transparent diction can never be too highly appreciated. He has frequently given interest and animation to the driest subjects by the mere force and dexterity of his verse, and the felicity of his illustrations. His narrative poetry is unequalled for its clearness, its spirit, and rapidity, and has the power of arousing and retaining the attention of the duller reader. Of his translation of Virgil, Pope has said, that it is "the most noble and most spirited translation that he knew in any language." In the mechanism of his art, Dryden still stands unrivalled. His versification is energetic, varied, and sonorous. He seems to have a perfect command over the language, and is never stopped for a rhyme or compelled to modify a thought to suit the verse, which seems as natural to him as the most colloquial prose. He betrays no toil or anxiety—no painful attention to minute details—but dashes boldly forward, and thinks more of the end than of the means. Excellencies that in other poets are the produce of labour and meditation, seem in him the effect of instinct or good fortune. But with all this assemblage of fine qualities, Dryden was not a poet of the very highest order. Of his twenty-eight dramas, only two or three are remembered, and even these scarcely deserve their happier fate. It is true that there are fine passages in his *Don Sebastian* and his *All for Love*, but even these plays, which are amongst his best, betray a total absence of true dramatic power.* They are full of noble declamation and

* Dryden preferred the scene between Anthony and Ventidius in the first act of *All for Love*, to any thing he had ever written in the dramatic line.

vigorous sentiment, but the characters do not breathe the breath of life. There is no genuine passion in any of his dramas, and he himself was perfectly conscious of this deficiency; but as he was obliged to write for his bread, he forced his mind to uncongenial efforts in compliance with the public demand for a species of poetry which had been so long suppressed by the rigid morality of the Puritans, and in favor of which there was such a strong reaction. The muse of Dryden, perhaps, never drew a tear. He had no power over the finer sensibilities of our nature, and had little sympathy for the ideal. He loved the palpable and the familiar. There is true and vigorous poetry in his verses, but it seems rather the free movement of a masculine understanding, than the glow of a fine imagination or the impulse of profound sensibility. But never were intellectual power and manly sentiments expressed with more facility and force than in the pages of this admirable writer.

CHARLES SACKVILLE,

Born 1637.—Died 1705-6. Reigns—Charles I. Cromwell. Charles II. William and Mary. Anne.

Sackville, Earl of Dorset, was a person of courtly manners and sprightly conversation. He is now better known for his patronage of other men's works than for any merit in his own, though Dryden, in the fervour of his gratitude and in compliance with the fashion of the time, made him ridiculous by extravagant laudation, forgetting that "praise undeserved" must always wear the appearance of "censure in disguise." In his discourse on the *Origin and Progress of Satire* addressed to the Earl of Dorset, he tells his Lordship, that he is "the restorer of poetry, the greatest genius, the truest judge, and the best patron;" that "there is not an English writer this day living who is not perfectly convinced that his Lordship excels all others in the several parts of poetry which he has undertaken to adorn;" that his lyric poems are "the delight of this age and will be the envy of the next;" that he is "by undisputed title, the king of poets;" and that to prove the superiority of the modern writers, over the ancients he "would instance his Lordship in satire and Shakespeare in tragedy." "Would it be imagined," says Johnson, "that of this rival to antiquity, all the satires are little personal invectives, and that his longest composition was a song of eleven stanzas?" The only excuse that can be offered for Dryden is the fact that he did but exaggerate the general opinion, for Dorset was a great public favorite, and a man to whom almost all his contemporaries looked up with respect and

admiration ; and there was a tone of adulation in all the dedications of the day, particularly in those addressed to his Lordship, that made moderate approbation seem by contrast cold and churlish. Even Pope called him “ the Muse’s pride.” Dorset’s verses are never below mediocrity, and they never rise much above it. They have neither force nor dignity ; but they are not without elegance and animation. Dorset owes his claim upon the regard of posterity to the enlightened generosity of his patronage of better writers than himself.

JOHN PHILIPS,

Born 1676—Died 1708. Reigns—Charles II. William and Mary. Anne.

In 1703, his ear being haunted with the majestic harmonies of the *Paradise Lost*, and his mind having naturally a humorous cast, he composed his *Splendid Shilling*, which, while it parodied Milton, showed an intimate acquaintance with his noble cadences. This poem was at one time a little too highly estimated, but it undoubtedly takes a prominent place amongst the burlesque poems in our language.

DR. THOMAS PARNELL,

Born 1679—Died 1766. Reigns—William and Mary.

The most popular of Parnell’s poems is *The Hermit*, though the story is not original. His poetry is distinguished for suavity and smoothness, and in most of his compositions there is an air of natural feeling, guided but not altered or subdued by art, that is always pleasing.

NICHOLAS ROWE,

Born 1673—Died 1718. Reigns—Charles II. James II. William and Mary. Anne. George I.

Dr. Johnson bestows high praise on the *Fair Penitent*, and does not seem to have any suspicion of its want of originality. It is the play by which the name of Rowe is still preserved, and though in this production he owed much to Massinger, he has also displayed in it resources of his own. Johnson says of it, that “ there is scarcely any work of any poet at once so interesting by the fable and so delightful by the language. The story is domestic, and therefore easily received by the imagination, and assimilated to common life ; the diction is exquisitely harmonious, and soft or

sprightly as occasion requires." Next to the *Fair Penitent*, the most popular of his plays, is *Jane Shore*. The author intended this play as an imitation of Shakespeare, but no critic has yet been able to trace the resemblance. "It was mighty simple," said Pope, "in Rowe to write a play now professedly in Shakspeare's style, that is, *professedly in the style of a bad age*." (!)

Rowe's smaller miscellaneous pieces are now little known, and perhaps do not deserve more notice than they receive, but his translation of *Lucan* has called forth the ardent praise of Dr. Johnson, who pronounces it "one of the greatest productions of English Poetry; for there is perhaps none," he adds, "that so completely exhibits the genius and spirit of the original." *Colin's Complaint*, one of the most harmonious of his smaller pieces, seems to have suggested Shenstone's Pastorals.

JOSEPH ADDISON,

Born 1672—Died 1719. Reigns—Charles II. William and Mary. Anne. George I.

In 1713, Addison produced his tragedy of *Cato*. Pope expressed a high opinion of it as a poem; but declared it to be his opinion that it would not succeed upon the stage. In considering it a poor acting play he was unquestionably in the right, but it happened to obtain for a while an extraordinary degree of success upon the stage; not owing to its intrinsic merit, but the spirit of party which then raged with uncommon fury. Addison's miscellaneous verses were sometimes pleasing, but never ardent, elevated or energetic.

As a prose writer he is one of the most instructive and delightful authors in the language. Nothing can be more exquisite than his quiet humour in the portrait of Sir Roger de Coverley; nothing can be more elegant, clear, and judicious than most of his moral and critical Essays. His prose fictions are inimitable. His vision of Mirza is beyond all praise for the elegance of the allegory and the grace and propriety of the diction. Though in the form of prose, it seems to show a more poetical spirit than any of his verse-productions. The tragedy of *Cato* has been spoken of by some critics with unlimited commendation, and by others with profound contempt. Voltaire wondered how a nation that produced the tragedy of *Cato* could admire Shakespeare. It is a fine dramatic poem full of eloquent declamation and noble sentiment, but as a representation of human passion, it is sadly deficient in truth and nature.

MATTHEW PRIOR,

*Born 1664—Died 1724. Reigns—Charles II. James II. William and Mary.
Anne. George I.*

Prior's longer poems are tedious. They are deficient in spirit and true passion. But his smaller pieces are sprightly and ingenious. The versification is singularly neat, flowing and felicitous.

WILLIAM CONGREVE,

*Born 1672—Died 1729. Reigns—Charles II. James II. William III. Anne.
George I., II.*

Congreve's Comedies are still admired for their brilliant dialogue ; but they are tainted with indecency and immorality. His only tragedy, *The Mourning Bride*, is now very little read or esteemed, notwithstanding Dr. Johnson's extravagant praise of a rather striking passage in it, which he thought finer than any thing in Shakspeare.

JOHN GAY,

Born 1688—Died 1732. Reigns—William I., II. Anne. George I., II.

As a poet he was not of a high order ; but his works are often agreeable ; and are generally moral and instructive. Perhaps his best works are his ballads.

JONATHAN SWIFT,

*Born 1667.—Died 1745. Reigns—Charles II. James II. William and Mary.
Anne. George I., II.*

Swift's compositions both in prose and verse are the most unornamented in the language. He trusts entirely to his matter, and anxious only that his meaning shall be clear, he selects the simplest and most expressive words. His diction suits his matter. He is never very elevated or refined, but the utter absence of all affectation precludes vulgarity. His sincerity and directness, the manly intrepidity with which he often tells plain truths in plain language, and the unrivalled force and fertility of his humour will always gain a crowd of readers and admirers, though a lover of man and nature must wish that Swift's mind had been more susceptible of the finer emotions, and lament that his vigorous powers should have been employed in deepening the shadows of human life. Of his poetry little need be said. It hardly deserves the name. It has scarcely half

a dozen lines that are elevated above plain prose. It is to the full, however, as witty and clever as his political pamphlets, and always pleases by the easy vigour and admirable perspicuity of its diction and the happiness and accuracy of its rhymes. His verses are in fact as good as can be made by mere wit and sound sense unaccompanied with a poetical imagination.

ALEXANDER POPE,

Born 1688—Died 1744. Reigns—William and Mary. Anne. George I., II.

The character of Pope as a poet has been the subject of long and still continued controversy. Some critics deny that he is at all entitled to the name of poet, and others go into the opposite extreme and place him in the very highest rank. But that he is an admirable writer of some sort or other, if not a true poet, is almost universally admitted. He had, beyond all question, an intellect of extraordinary delicacy and acuteness, and possessed the power of expressing his thoughts with unrivalled closeness, elegance, and precision. But when Byron compared him to Shakespeare he was guilty of an idle extravagance. With some hesitation regarding the rival claims of Dryden, Pope's may safely be pronounced the first name in the second class of British poets, the first class consisting of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton. These four great writers are fairly entitled to such high distinction, because they pierce beyond externals and mere conventionalisms. Their representations of humanity are not local or temporary. They do not describe manners but men. They wrote for all ages and for all countries. Their language alone is not universal; and this was no fault of theirs. The curse of Babel falls with peculiar severity upon the poets, for the fresh bloom of poetic inspiration is always injured in the process of translation. But foreigners who master our language, however unfamiliar with our manners, can never fail to recognize those truthful delineations of general and everlasting nature which abound in the pages of the four great poets already mentioned. Shakespeare, especially, has addressed himself to the universal heart. The jealousy of Othello and the ambition of Macbeth are as perfectly apprehended by the intelligent Hindu alumni of an English College in Calcutta as by the students of a scholastic establishment in the poet's native land. But Pope was too much of a London poet of the Eighteenth century. He is so local and temporary that many of his allusions are

now wholly unintelligible even to his own countrymen. His satires, especially, are limited and obscure. It would be almost impossible, for example, to make a native of Hindostan, comprehend the greater portion of his *Epistle on the Characters of Women*. But Shakespeare's females are sketched with such miraculous power, and with such fidelity to general nature, that they are recognized in all countries and in all ages by every reader who can understand the language in which his plays are written. Some of the German writers have entered upon an analysis of Shakespeare's characters, with perhaps more enthusiasm and judgment than any of our own critics, and even they who are acquainted with him only through the medium of translation, acknowledge his merits with delight and wonder. But it is hardly fair to Pope to compare him in any way or for a single moment with Shakespeare. No two poets could be more widely separated from each other in the peculiarities of their genius. We ought to contemplate Pope in his own sphere. Let those who think his station at the head of the second order of poets not sufficiently distinguished, consider how few stand above him, and what a long list of bright and honorable names are placed beneath him.

If Pope's verses owed so much to art, they owed still more to inspiration. It must be admitted that he was not distinguished for that irrepressible enthusiasm for truth and beauty, and that profound insight into general nature, which characterize the very highest order of poetic genius. These were not the predominant qualities of his mind. His genius seemed upon the whole better fitted to satisfy the understanding than to touch the heart or kindle the imagination; though he was occasionally both tender and imaginative in no ordinary degree. No writer ever compressed so much sound sense into so narrow a compass and with so much elegance and ease. Condensation and perspicuity are amongst his most conspicuous merits. His satire wants breadth, but it never wants point, and no author in the English language has ever turned a compliment with more exquisite ingenuity and grace. His praise was the more valuable because it was always honest. It is said that Alderman Barber gave Pope to understand that he would make him a present of five thousand pounds for a single compliment. But the poet always boasted that he was "no man's slave or heir." It is also reported that he was offered in vain a considerable sum of money by the Duchess of Marlborough if he would give a good character of the Duke.*

* The knowledge of these offers of payment for praise might possibly have suggested, however unjustly, the scandal respecting a supposed offer for the sup-

Though Pope could not stir the depths of the human heart or raise vehement emotions, he knew how to win our gentler sympathies. The sweetest and most unaffected passages in all his poetry are his domestic allusions. His egotism, when it is touched with tenderness, is inexpressibly engaging. He has not much humour, but his wit is always sharp and brilliant.

His versification has, perhaps, been overrated. It is highly polished, and is unrivalled in mere smoothness, but its uniformity, in a long poem, fatigues the ear. He was over-fastidious, and confined himself too exclusively to certain favorite sounds. There is hardly a line, perhaps, in all his poetry that is novel in the construction. In the sonnets of Shakespeare and the works of still earlier poets, we frequently meet with couplets of which Pope's are but the echo. In studying the versification of other poets, he seems to have been attracted rather by separate lines than to have been charmed with the general effect, and in reproducing these in too close connection without the intermixture of other sounds, the music is marred indeed by no discord, but it is wearisomely deficient in variety. The notes are sweet enough in themselves, but they are not skilfully blended. There is no linked sweetness long drawn out, nor does he delight the ear with any musical surprise. When Pope borrows thoughts (and notwithstanding the richness of his own resources, he is a bold and frequent plagiarist,) he is generally more successful than in his thefts of sound. He rarely appropriates another poet's idea without improving it.

JAMES THOMSON,

Born 1700.—Died 1748. Reigns—George I., II.

Thomson's dramatic writings are heavy and declamatory, and none of his works are now generally read, except his *Seasons* and the *Castle of Indolence*. Some critics prefer the latter, which is in the Spenserean stanza, to his great descriptive poem in blank verse; but exquisite as is the *Castle of Indolence*, the public have decided, and perhaps correctly, in favor of the *Seasons*. Thomson himself thought the poem on

pression of a satire on the Duchess of Marlborough (under the name of Atossa) and the poet's reported acceptance of it. Pope had also in his lifetime been accused of receiving a thousand pounds from the Duke of Chandos, and ungratefully returning the kindness with a satire. The receipt of the money he flatly and indignantly denied. He proudly asserted that if he was a good poet there was one thing upon which he valued himself, and which was rare amongst good poets—a perfect independence. "I have never," he said, "flattered any man; nor ever received any thing of any man for my verses."

Liberty his best work. The vividness and fidelity of his pictures of external nature and the true poetic feeling which they evince, must always secure a wide popularity for the *Seasons*, notwithstanding the cumbrous verbosity of the style. His blank verse is nearly the worst in the language, from its formal and sluggish movement. He had no ear, and not much taste. Johnson mentions that amongst his peculiarities was a very ungraceful and inarticulate manner of pronouncing any lofty or solemn composition, and that Doddington, himself an elegant reader, once snatched the book from his hands and told him he did not understand his own verses. All his excellence he owed to a happy genius. He was too lazy to polish his versification and retrench exuberances. It was said that his works contained

“No line which dying he could wish to blot.”

In a moral sense this is a well deserved and noble compliment, but it must not be applied to his poetry as a purely literary decision. It is a pity that he had not struck out a great many ponderous lines and clumsy epithets in his *Seasons*. With all its defects, however, it is a delightful production, and is still regarded as the best descriptive poem in any language.

AMBROSE PHILIPS,

Born 1671.—Died 1749. *Reigns—Charles II. William and Mary. Anne. George I., II.*

Philips does not stand very high in the list of British Poets. His *Pastorals* are contemptible, and his poems in the seven-syllable measure are little better than nursery rhymes. It was on their account that he obtained the name of *Namby Pamby*.

The *Letter from Copenhagen* evinces powers of description which cultivation might have brought to excellence. This indeed is written “nobly,” and it is strange that a poet, who could produce such a work, should have composed and published so many verses that are almost too trifling for the perusal of children.

WILLIAM COLLINS,

Born 1721.—Died 1756. *Reigns—George I., II.*

Dr. Johnson warmly loved the man, but he could not cordially appreciate his merits as a poet. Collins required more imagination in his reader than his great biographer possessed.

He was one of the *truest* poets that ever lived, and under happier circumstances he might have become a great one. Johnson was not a first-rate critic when called upon to characterize the pure poetry of a highly imaginative mind. He shone most on subjects requiring logical analysis. He asserts that the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure. But the critic here speaks only for himself. The majority of readers have judged and felt very differently.

ALLAN RAMSAY,

Born 1686—Died 1757. Reigns—James II. William and Mary. Anne. George I., II.

Ramsay's English poems are "poor indeed," but when he wrote in his own language, though he was sometimes a little coarse and vulgar, he always exhibited natural powers of no ordinary character. Thomas Campbell says of the *Gentle Shepherd*, that "like the poetry of Tasso and Ariosto, it is engraved on the memory of its country. Its verses have passed into proverbs, and it continues to be the delight and solace of the peasantry whom it describes."

JOHN DYER,

Born 1700—Died——. Reigns—Anne. George I., II.

Akenside is said to have observed that he would regulate his opinion of the reigning taste by the fate of Dyer's *Fleece*; for, if that were ill received, he should not think it any longer reasonable to expect fame from excellence. It has never been popular and probably never will be. The subject in its details is ill adapted to poetical illustration. The poem contains a few noble passages, but the author generally betrays a painful struggle to support his humble subject at that elevation which true poetry requires. Wordsworth, however, is amongst the admirers of this production, and gives expression to his sentiments in a complimentary sonnet. The *Ruins of Rome* has a nobler subject, and is treated with the skill and spirit of a poet. But the most popular of Dyer's poems, and perhaps the best, is *Grongar Hill*. It abounds in animated descriptions. The style, however, is negligent and inaccurate, and sometimes obscure. It is not very clearly intimated that the *Silent Nymph* addressed at the opening of the poem is Fancy. The poem was originally published in a volume of miscellaneous verses, collected and pub-

lished by Richard Savage. The following were then the initial lines :—

“ FANCY, nymph that loves to lie
On the lovely eminence ;
Darting notice through the eye,
Forming thought and feasting sense.
Thou that must lend imagination wings
And stamp distinction on all worldly things,
Come and with thy various hues
Paint and adorn thy sister muse.

WILLIAM SHENSTONE,

Born 1714—Died 1763. Reigns—George I., II., III.

Shenstone was a man of fine taste rather than of original genius. He was deficient in imagination. His style is feeble and artificial. His best production is *The School Mistress*. It was at first published as an avowed burlesque, and the author accompanied it with a ludicrous index “purely to show fools that he was in jest.” He was apparently apprehensive that the author himself might be more smiled at than the pleasant allusions in the poem. He was afraid to trust himself to nature. But the simplicity, tenderness and humour of this production place it greatly above all his other works. His brief prose essays evince much delicacy and acuteness of observation.

CHARLES CHURCHILL,

Born 1731—Died 1764. Reigns—George II., III.

As a poet Churchill would probably have held a much higher rank than he has attained, if his subjects had been less local and temporary, and he had bestowed more care upon his composition. He had prodigious force of style, and his versification in its strength, freedom, and variety often reminds us of his favourite poet, Dryden. He had a great contempt for the cautious accuracy of Pope, whose delicacy, closeness, and precision were perhaps beyond his reach. But in earnest vehement invective, he was unrivalled. He deals in no unmeaning general abuse, but seizes characteristic points with wonderful dexterity, and presents a clear and consistent picture to the reader's eye. Nothing can be more spirited and powerful than the character of Mr. Fitzpatrick in the *Rosciad*. Its bitterness of contempt, its broad humour, and its extraordinary force and felicity of diction, render it a masterpiece of personal satire. His severity, how-

ever, is so withering, and he bears such a stern and unrelenting malignity towards the objects of his hostility, that the reader pities his victims, and is sometimes shocked at the absolute brutality of his attacks. It is said that, with the exception of Hogarth (who represented him in one of his prints as a bear with a pot of porter,) all those whom he assailed in his works were guiltless of the slightest personal provocation.

EDWARD YOUNG,

Born 1681—Died 1765. Reigns—James II. William III. Anne.
George I., II., III.

Young produced three tragedies, *Busiris*, *The Brothers*, and the *Revenge*. The last of the three is the best known. They are all somewhat turgid and melodramatic. The *Night Thoughts* is undoubtedly the greatest and most popular of Young's productions. It is, oddly enough, a favorite with the French, who look upon it as characteristic of our national genius. It is such a poem, they say, as we must consider congenial reading for "the gloomy month of November, when Englishmen hang or drown themselves." Perhaps it is neither the solemn tone, nor the stern morality of the poem, that charms our neighbours, but the false sublimity and far-fetched wit. It contains occasional passages of genuine poetry and profound thought, but it throws a dreary shadow upon human life, and is sadly deficient in truth of feeling and simplicity of expression. We see more of the wit than the poet. The writer creates an impression that he is insincere; because his thoughts are rarely natural and spontaneous. He is apparently always on the look out for something new and strange. He often startles the reader's understanding, but he seldom touches his heart. From the sombre nature of his subject and his melancholy views of life, he produces a general feeling of depression, but not of tenderness. His sorrow never makes us weep, and his wit never makes us laugh. There is too much unconcealed art and trickery in both. The whole poem is one series of smart yet solemn antitheses. His fancy is always active and ingenious, but it rarely glows. His Muse has a kind of ghastly vivacity, and his illustrations rather surprise than please. His versification is sometimes too much broken into short independent sentences, but where he allows it to flow in a more continuous stream, it is vigorous, varied, and sonorous. His *Satires* preceded Pope's. They are, like the *Night Thoughts*, a collection of epigrams. The characters are almost all overwrought, and the attention is

so much attracted to the painter's skill that it scarcely occurs to the reader to consider whether the portraits are true or not to nature. It is clear that the satirist himself is more solicitous to prove himself a wit than to reform his victims. He is never carried out of himself by a natural enthusiasm. The smart wit ambitious of our applause comes between us and his subject. In some of Dryden's or Churchill's portraits we never think of the artist.

In spite of his defects, Young is a writer who will always enforce attention. He is an original thinker, and has great energy of style.

WILLIAM FALCONER,

Born 1730—Died 1769. Reigns—George II., III.

The poem of the *Shipwreck* though it contains too many technicalities, too many long speeches, some misplaced pedantry, and a considerable number of feeble and prosaic lines, is on the whole a striking and interesting production, and preserves amidst all its defects an air of truth and reality.

MARK AKENSIDE,

Born 1721—Died 1770. Reigns—George I., II., III.

Akenside's reputation as a poet depends exclusively upon the great production of his youth, the *Pleasures of Imagination*. His later works by no means kept pace with his splendid early promise. His brief *Inscriptions*, indeed, are graceful and harmonious, but his *Odes* are contemptible; and when he attempted to revise or re-write his *Pleasures of Imagination*, he rather injured than improved the poem. The original idea of the work was borrowed from Addison's elegant papers in the *Spectator* on the same subject. It exhibits throughout the resources of a refined intellect and a lively fancy. The versification is musical and flowing. The writer, however, is too much on stilts, and the diction is redundant.

THOMAS^o CHATTERTON,

Born 1752—Died 1770. Reigns—George II., III.

Chatterton's poetry has been somewhat overrated. It was truly wonderful for a boy, but had it been written by a full-

grown man there would have been nothing miraculous in it. He is the most extraordinary youthful prodigy in the records of British literature. But the promise of precocity is not always fulfilled. The critics fell into the most extravagant absurdities respecting his pretensions. Malone said, he was the greatest genius that England had produced since the days of Shakespeare. Dr. Gregory thought the same. Mr. Herbert Croft asserted, that "no such being at any period of life, has ever been known, or possibly ever will be known." It is almost enough to bring the race of learned men into contempt when we recollect the successful impositions of Chatterton and Ireland.* Stripped of its antique garb the poetry under the name of Rowley is perfectly modern in its tone and spirit. It even abounds in plagiarisms from writers of a much later date than that attributed to the supposed ancient manuscripts, and has a smoothness and finish that ought to have raised the suspicion of every critic at all acquainted with the early effusions of the English Muse.

THOMAS GRAY,

Born 1716—Died 1771. Reign—George I., II., III.

It is said that Gray was one of the most learned men in Europe. It is not his learning, however, for which the world now cares. His small collection of brief poems, which might be compressed into a dozen pages, forms his sole title to lasting admiration. His odes have an air of grandeur, and the versification is exquisitely harmonious. They are undoubtedly very noble productions, though we trace in them more indications of consummate art, than of the enthusiasm of genius. If Gray had given way more to his natural impulses, as in his tender and pensive *Elegy*, he would not have raised so many doubts in the minds of critics as to his rank and character as a poet. Though there is unquestionably more art than nature in his celebrated odes, yet it is the art of a man of genius. His gorgeously elaborated composition possesses that kind of excellence which is recognized in the most perfect specimens of ornamental architecture in Gothic cathedrals. Dr. Johnson has done injustice to the odes of Gray in his harsh verbal criticism; but he has made him some amends by his high commendation of the *Elegy*. "Had Gray," he observes, "often written thus, it would have been vain to blame and useless to praise him."

* Ireland fabricated Shakspearean Manuscripts which men of learning went down upon their knees to kiss.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH,

Born 1728—Died 1774. Reigns—George I., II., III.

The poetry of Goldsmith is almost universally popular. It exhibits neither ambitious flights of fancy, nor strained enthusiasm, nor wild bursts of passion; but no reader of taste or feeling can be insensible to its unaffected elegance, its quiet humour, its gentle pathos, and its harmonious versification. His prose is as exquisite as his poetry. It has the same suavity of manner, the same sportive grace, and ease and purity of diction.

JOHN ARMSTRONG,

Born 1709—Died 1779. Reigns—George I., II., III.

The Art of Preserving Health is one of the most pleasing didactic poems in the language. The author has evinced no ordinary skill in the management of a subject so uncongenial to the Muse. He has few "thoughts that breathe and words that burn," but he has taste and judgment, and he has availed himself of every legitimate means within his reach to preserve the elevated tone which poetry demands. His sentiments are manly and judicious, and his style is vigorous, accurate and clear.

SAMUEL JOHNSON,

Born 1709—Died 1784. Reigns—George I., II., III.

As a poet Doctor Johnson is less distinguished than as a moralist and critic. His rhymed verse is always characterized by good sense, and great clearness, energy, and compression; but it has not the fervour of poetical genius. His dramatic verse is verbose and ponderous. In the tragedy of *Irene*, "Passion sleeps while Declamation roars."

RICHARD GLOVER,

Born 1712—Died 1785. Reigns—George I., II., III.

Glover lived to see the decline of his reputation, but witnessed the change without irritation or distress. It may serve to shake our confidence in contemporary criticism, when we recollect how many false and absurd opinions have been expressed respecting the publications of their time by men of acknowledged sagacity and taste. Glover's ear was evidently defective, and yet his versification was once preferred

to Milton's. He is particularly partial to those brief and abrupt sentences that give the reader a succession of unpleasant jerks. The following passage may be quoted as an example of the kind of verse which was more highly valued by several professed critics than those elaborate and finely blended harmonies which enchant us in the sublimest of all British Epics—*The Paradise Lost*—

“ The warriors stopped contemplating the seat
Of rural quiet. Suddenly a swain
Steps forth. His fingers touch the breathing reed.
Uprise the fleecy train. Each faithful dog
Is roused. All heedful of the wonted sound
Their known conductor follow. Slow behind
The observing warriors move.”

This might perhaps be defended as an example of imitative harmony in which the sound and metre are adapted to the things and circumstances described ; but here is another specimen of the poet's short shuffling steps for which the same excuse could not so easily be urged. He moves as if he had gyves on his feet.

“ Let no word

Impede the careful peasant. On his charge
Depends our welfare. Diligent and staid
He suits his godlike master. Thou wilt see
That righteous hero soon. Now sleep demands
Our debt to nature. On a carpet dry
Of moss beneath a wholesome beech they lay,
Armed as they were. Their slumber short retires,
With night's last shadow. At their warning roused,
The troops proceed.”

The poem is cold and passionless, but its sentiments are liberal and pure. It abounds in classical allusions and pleasing imagery. Glover, however, had not sufficient strength of genius to give interest and vitality to so long a poem. It is sinking into oblivion.

JOHN LOGAN,

Born 1748—Died 1788. Reigns—George II., III.

This little *Ode to the Cuckoo* is the most pleasing of all Logan's works. Its simplicity and tenderness delighted Burke, who sought the acquaintance of the author. On the death of Bruce, Logan had the charge of his manuscripts, and the friends of the former have averred that he was the real author of this beautiful little poem. It is certain, however, that it was seen in Logan's handwriting, that he laid claim to it openly, and that the charge of plagiarism was not brought against him in his life-time.

WILLIAM JULIUS MICKLE,

Born 1734—Died 1788. Reigns—George II., III.

Mickle is much better known and esteemed as the translator of the *Lusiad* than as an original poet, but his own verses exhibit fine taste and true poetic feeling, though they have not much force.

THOMAS WARTON,

Born 1728—Died 1790. Reigns—George II., III.

The poetry of Thomas Warton is sometimes a little stiff and pedantic, and he assumes a higher tone of passion and enthusiasm than he is always able to support. He is too fond of alliteration, and his study of other poets has led him into perpetual imitation. But his verses are obviously the production of a refined mind. His descriptive pieces have great merit, and his sonnets have been pronounced by Hazlitt to be amongst the best in the language. He was fond of contemplating the splendid pomps of chivalry and the solemn grandeur of gothic architecture. He was a poetical antiquarian, and loved to prove that

“Not harsh nor barren are the winding ways
Of hoar antiquity, but strown with flowers.”

SIR WILLIAM JONES,

Born 1746—Died 1794. Reigns—George II., III.

There is a charm in some of Sir William Jones's smaller poems which leads the critic to the conviction that had he concentrated his powers upon the “Divine Art” he might have arrived at excellence as a poet. His learning overlaid his genius, and he spread his mind over too wide a surface. Human life is too brief, and the human intellect is too limited to allow any individual, however industrious or highly gifted, to reach and retain a hold of more than one or two of the upper branches of the tree of knowledge. No man can pluck all its fruitage with equal facility. Even the great powers and wonderful acquirements of Sir William Jones, however subservient to his own fame with those who confound extent with solidity and depth, were of less real utility to mankind than the labours of men of genius who have aimed at more limited excellence with greater concentration of mind and an exclusive devotion to one congenial pursuit.

ROBERT BURNS,

Born 1758—Died 1796. Reigns—George II., III.

This illustrious peasant affords a striking example of the force of genius unassisted by learning. We may say of Burns, as Dryden said of Shakespcare, that he did not read nature through the "spectacles of books." His lyrics are amongst the best that were ever written. They are simple and vigorous effusions of genuine passion. What a noble legacy has Burns left his country! He has thrown an Arcadian charm over some of Scotia's bleakest hills. He has doubly endeared to all patriotic Scotchmen every scene that he has described in his imperishable verses, and has showed the haughty and fastidious circles of high life how much generous feeling and refined and tender sentiment may warm a ploughman's heart. His poems are distinguished for earnestness and sincerity. All other love-songs by the side of his, seem false and feeble. Ben Jonson said of Cartwright, "my son Cartwright *writes all like a man*." This praise is especially due to Burns. But he is not only distinguished for vehemence and fire and a noble directness and sincerity, but for the richest humour and the deepest pathos. His tender sentiment is sometimes mingled with a charming playfulness; a combination that is always inexpressibly delightful, and is by no means unfrequent in the productions of true genius.

The life of Burns was a brief tragedy. Wordsworth beautifully speaks

"Of him who walked in glory and in joy,
Following his plough upon the mountain's side."

But unhappily this picture of "glory and joy" can be applied correctly to but a very small portion of the poet's short existence. The greater part of his life was passed in obscurity, and vain toil, and deep despondency, or in that unsettled state, "unfitted with an aim," which leads a fiery spirit to prey upon itself. He was in almost every respect a disappointed man. Generous, warm-hearted, and independent, he was also proud, passionate and ambitious, and with a just sense of his own worth, he found himself neglected by those from whom he had expected most. He was accustomed to give vent to his feelings in bursts of bitter scorn and vehement indignation. His "noble" friends only made a show of him, and when the nine days' wonder was over they left him to fall back again into his original obscurity and distress. He who had been pronounced the ornament of his

country, and who had been flattered for a season at the tables of the highest nobility of the land, at last obtained, as the reward of his invaluable and immortal productions, a place in the Excise worth seventy pounds a-year !

WILLIAM MASON,

Born 1725—Died 1797. Reigns—George I., II., III.

Mason's poems are studded with alliterations ; and there is generally something stilted and artificial in his style. But he had a fine ear for the music of verse, and an eye for picturesque effects. His lyrics have often a noble sound, and his descriptive passages have considerable splendour. His elegiac poems, however, are his best productions, because they are the most natural.

JOSEPH WARTON,

Born 1722—Died 1800. Reigns—George I., II., III.

As a poet Joseph Warton is more distinguished by good taste than genius. He is now best known as a critic.

WILLIAM COWPER,

Born 1731—Died 1800. Reigns—George II., III.

Cowper is one of the most popular poets in the language, and the fact is an honor to the character of English readers, for he has no false attractions. He has not even the charm of narrative to gratify those pretenders to taste, who, while they think themselves true lovers of poetry, take only the same kind of interest in a poem which children take in a prose story. His subjects are usually of a serious nature, and his sentiments are solemn and weighty. But his gravity is never dull, because the attention is kept awake by the earnestness and sincerity of his manner, and the unaffected force and freedom of his diction. His satire is somewhat too austere, but it seems the production of one who is more disgusted with the crime than the criminal. It is rarely personal. He says himself—

“ An individual is a sacred mark,
Not to be struck in sport or in the dark.”

Thomas Campbell notices one instance of personality, in which Cowper ridicules the Sunday parties of George Wesley, to whom he alludes under the name of Occiduus. Campbell

adds, "I know not to whom he alludes in the following lines."

" Nor he who, for the bane of thousands born
Built God a church, and laughed his word to scorn."

It is a hit at Voltaire, who built a church at Ferney with this inscription—*Deo erexit Voltaire*.* Cowper's satire in its vigorous freedom and vehement indignation reminds us of Churchill, whose style is very congenial with his own, though the spirit and matter are widely different. If Churchill had been a better man or Cowper a worse, it is probable that the similarity between them as poets would have been much closer than it is.

Cowper's greatest performance is *The Task*. It has no unity or regularity of design, and reads as if it were written from casual associations. Nothing can be more desultory and capricious. But it consists of such solid observations on life and manners—so much fine morality and just sentiment—such sweet touches of domestic feeling, and such an agreeable mixture of reflection and description, that perhaps there is no poem in the language which is read with more general delight. It is moreover thoroughly English both in sentiment and diction. Its pictures of domestic bliss could hardly be duly estimated out of England. The happy audacity with which he on all occasions uses the simplest but most expressive idiomatic phrases, and carries the muse into the haunts of our daily life, and touches like the sun, the meanest objects with a beautifying light, endears him as a poet to many of our countrymen who can neither understand nor appreciate some of our loftier and more fastidious writers. Next to Thomson he is the best descriptive poet in the language. He has less ideal beauty and less breadth and completeness as a landscape-painter than the author of the *Seasons*, but he has at least equal truth and reality. His pictures are touched with a masterly freedom that does not interfere with the most perfect distinctness and precision. His blank-verse is infinitely superior to Thomson's. It is more varied, vigorous, and elastic.

There was something effeminate in the personal habits of Cowper, but nothing can be more masculine than his verse. Indeed in his disdain of mere polish and sing-song he sometimes falls into the opposite extreme, and is slovenly

* Pope alludes to this inscription in one of his Moral Essays.

" Who builds a church to God, and not to fame,
Will never mark the marble with his name."

and rough. His translation of Homer is admired for its fidelity ; but it is undoubtedly deficient in elegance and elevation of style, though his simplicity and plainness often give a better notion of the old Grecian bard than we receive from the spruce and elaborate prettinesses of Pope.

Cowper's letters are truly delightful. They are distinguished by the most enchanting playfulness, tenderness, and simplicity, and open out his amiable and pure heart in a style of exquisite ingenuousness. They are occasionally full of the most delicate humour and the nicest and truest observations upon life and manners. It is melancholy, indeed, to reflect that so fine a nature as that of Cowper should have been exposed to the visitations of the most dreadful malady that can afflict a human being !

ERASMUS DARWIN,

Born 1731—Died 1802. Reigns—George II., III.

Darwin's various scientific publications are considered ingenious and learned, but somewhat more fanciful than exact. As a poet his style is brilliant but cold. He had a notion that mere picture was the chief constituent of true poetry. So long as he presented an image to the fancy, he cared not to touch the heart. His versification is highly polished and spirited, but is deficient in variety. The poetical work by which he is now best known is the *Botanic Garden*.

JAMES BEATTIE,

Born 1735—Died 1803. Reigns—George II., III.

Beattie's poetry is always elegant, but is deficient in force and spirit. Its general tone is sweet but languid. Occasionally, however, he delights us with a burst of poetical enthusiasm.

JOHN KEATS,

Born 1796—Died 1821. Reigns—George III., IV.

The poetry of Keats was the production of a genius prolific and powerful, but immature and inexperienced, and rather, as he himself described his *Endymion*, a feverish attempt than a deed accomplished. But English poetical literature does not afford an instance of higher promise in so young a poet. In his fragment of *Hyperion* there are passages of almost Miltonic grandeur. What such a genius might have per-

formed had he enjoyed a long and healthy career, it is not easy to say ; but it would have surprised no discriminating critic, had he taken a station amongst the mightiest spirits of our land. He was gifted with a singularly rich imagination and a sensibility "tremblingly alive to each fine impulse." He carried his pure and beautiful abstractions into his daily life, and saw

"Such sights as youthful poets dream."

He was not a poet by fits and starts only, but at all times and seasons. The enthusiasm and sensibility of his nature were never for a moment subdued or blunted by the world. His friend, Leigh Hunt, tells us, that at the recital of a noble action or at a beautiful thought, his eyes, which were large, dark, and sensitive, would suffuse with tears, while his lips trembled.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY,

Born 1792—Died 1822. Reigns—George III., IV.

As a poet, Shelley is distinguished for the extraordinary splendour of his imagination. There is, however, too much glare and confusion in his dream-like magnificence. His poems are fragmental and chaotic, and there is a dazzling obscurity about them that will probably prevent their ever finding a way to the general heart. Now and then, indeed, when he condescends to adopt a plainer manner, he discloses a nature of the most profound and passionate tenderness. Had he lived longer he might have somewhat subdued his style and aimed more at truth and simplicity.

Shelley was rich in the materials of his art, but he did not know how to turn them to the best account. There is a want of repose and keeping in his poetry. His admirers cannot lay their hands on a single poem that is not studded with beauties as thickly as the stars in heaven, but like those stars they shine out from the dark. They are in strong contrast with deep shades of error. If his beauties are numerous, they are not more so than his defects. He is generally unhappy in his choice of subjects or in his mode of treating them. The least imperfect and most equal of his poems, the tragedy of *Cenci*, (in many respects a noble work) is exceedingly repulsive from the nature of the story. It is strange that the writer could expect such a production to gain an entrance into domestic circles. Swift had an unnatural craving for filthy subjects, and Shelley had an equally unnatural leaning towards such as are morally re-

pulsive. It is impossible, therefore, that he should ever become a popular poet, unless a very great change (and one by no means for the better) should take place in the moral tone of society. But this is not the only bar to his success. His imagination was magnificently fertile; but he was singularly defective in those powers which might have given direction, consistency, and completeness to his fitful fragmentary and gorgeous visions. His poems are all more or less imperfect. His inspiration was convulsive—not continuous. One verse is a miracle of genius—the next, almost any wretched poetaster might have written. In one line we have a flash of ethereal light, in another “chaos is come again.” From no poet could there be selected single lines or brief unconnected passages of such startling and surpassing beauty, but it really cannot be said that there is a single one of his poems, which has not some strange defect in it. One of the most beautiful of his short pieces, is the *Lines written in dejection in the Bay of Naples*. Some of the lines are exquisitely pathetic and melodious, but others are harsh and almost unintelligible. There is no fault so injurious to the success of a poem as obscurity. The reader is soon disgusted with the labor of discovering hidden meanings. Poetry is addressed to the general heart. Its first object is pleasure (though indirect instruction ought to follow, and nothing is more calculated to injure its effect, than a want of clearness and simplicity. With all his high genius, Shelley has little chance of immortality on earth. If he had struck out from his poems all that was far-fetched, extravagant, and obscure, and shaped them into works of more completeness, he would have left us less than one-fourth of the quantity; but *that* small portion would have lived for ever! It is a truism that requires frequent repetition in this day, when voluminousness is mistaken for power, that the *quality* and not the *quantity* of any production is the test of its value. The poets of the present day seem to think, that whatever is written easily must be easily read, and that whatever is once born of the brain, has as much right to live, as the offspring of the body.

LORD BYRON,

Born 1788—Died 1824. Reigns—George III., IV.

Since the death of Lord Byron, the poetry that discolours life and nature with the hues of morbid passion, has lost much of its attraction for general readers. It is no longer

fashionable. Even before his powerful genius was silenced by death, the public mind was almost satiated with his melodramatic horrors; and his grand and gloomy egotism became every day less impressive. People were tired of seeing the same actor in so many different scenes, as they recognized in a moment his individual tone and aspect under every disguise. He had little invention—little dramatic genius—and was therefore compelled, on all occasions, to delineate his own sombre character. His eloquent misanthropy and his disdainful pride produced at first a powerful effect from their novelty and boldness, but, latterly, nothing but the force and animation of his style enabled him to retain his influence over the public mind. It became thoroughly understood that it was in vain to expect any absolutely new creations from the mint of Byron's fancy. His own lordly physiognomy was stamped on every coin. But this uniformity of style and barrenness of invention were forgiven him on account of his impassioned sensibility and his incomparable energy of expression. He had always ready at his command "the thoughts that breathe and the words that burn." His concentration, his force, and his perspicuity, were qualities that rendered him acceptable to all classes of readers. The same degree of egotism, and the same monotony of style and subject in a feebler writer, would hardly have been tolerated for a day. But genuine intellectual power, however ill-directed, must always secure the attention of mankind. It may be feared or hated, but it cannot be despised.

It may be prophesied with perfect safety, that the poetry of Lord Byron, though it will probably be much less highly esteemed by posterity than it was by his contemporaries, will never be neglected or forgotten.

REGINALD HEBER,

Born 1783—Died 1826. Reigns—George III., IV.

Heber's poetry is elegant and musical. His domestic pieces have much grace and tenderness.

SIR WALTER SCOTT,

Born 1771—Died 1832. Reigns—George III., IV. William IV.

Bulwer maintains that Scott is greater as a poet than as a novelist. There will not be many converts to this very singular creed. Scott was without all question the greatest

Romance writer of his time, but he was far behind many of his contemporaries in poetical genius. The sun of Byron had scarcely risen above the horizon, before the lesser light of Scott grew dim in the eyes of all men. The noble poet greatly surpassed him, even in the vulgar art of obtaining a certain kind of popularity amongst unpoetical readers by melodramatic tales in metre, which are so often greedily devoured by persons who are utterly blind or indifferent to the poetical beauties, by which they may be illustrated or accompanied. Scott's animated tales, in smooth and easy verse, were read with eagerness and pleasure by vast multitudes, who had no more taste for pure poetry than had Bentham or Mill or Macculloch. It was the story they devoured, not the imagery; but they no doubt flattered themselves that they were appreciating a poet when they were merely enjoying the genius of a good story-teller, who had chosen to give his narratives in verse instead of prose. In the same way many prosaic souls read Crabbe's Tales, and fancy they have a taste for poetry. But the true lover of poetry cares comparatively little for the mere narrative, and dwells with never-satiated delight on those lines and images which are the concentration of truth, and the embodiment of the soul of beauty.

The ordinary reader of a versified romance is satisfied when he has gone through the story. He then closes the book, and, being familiar with the incidents, has no temptation to return to it. But it is the peculiar privilege of poetry to present a feast "where no crude surfeit reigns,"—to create an appetite which grows with what it feeds on. We seldom return to prose works once fairly read through, and when we do so, it is rather to refresh the memory, than to renew our delight. But we go over favourite poems till we have them by heart, and repeat them a thousand times, and love and enjoy them the more at every repetition. There is a preciousness in the very words—hallowed as they are by a kind of inspiration. In other forms of literature, we care less for the words because the words are less sacred—less happily chosen, and are not so essentially connected with dearly treasured thoughts or images. Facts and sentiments of a prosaic and utilitarian nature, however valuable in themselves, do not at once receive and reflect a charm from the words in which they are enshrined, as is the case with poetical truths. They are not married, and admit of an easy separation.

Neither Scott nor Byron were remarkable for the higher poetical endowments which are most appreciated by those who care little for that part of the machinery of a poem which could be transferred without essential injury to a prose

fiction ; but assuredly the noble bard exhibited a larger share of these qualities in his writings than Sir Walter. If we were to take away from any one of the latter's poems the mere story, it would be bare indeed. A few descriptions would still remain, but even these are little better than mere transcripts—they have more of the accuracy of detail than the glow of imagination. There is a want of thought as well as of imagination in Scott's poetry, and this is the reason that it is so seldom quoted. His diction is prosaic and common-place. His words never glitter with the dews of Castalie. No British poet ever wrote so much and obtained such extensive popularity, with so little permanent effect upon the language. Wordsworth, though still an unpopular poet, has many admirable lines which have become as familiar as household words. They are so blended with the language, and the thoughts also, of our best public writers, that they are often repeated by persons who never opened a volume of his works. With respect even to the personages of Scott's Romances in metre, there is not one that has made any lasting impression upon the public mind. They are not psychological portraits, but rude though characteristic sketches of certain picturesque and romantic looking beings of a picturesque and romantic country and period. The poet has done little more than verify the ancient annals of his own land, and when he has left his old worm-eaten prose materials, he has fallen into the error of raising up associations that are incongruous with his subject. He jumbles old things with new. His style is the modern antique. His manner and his matter are often in startling contrast. No poet of half his eminence and real merit, has resorted so liberally to the use of the little arts and clap-traps of ordinary poetasters. Sir Walter Scott's mind was not essentially poetical, and we see this not only in his writings but in his life. But that he had great powers of some kind or other does not admit of a moment's question. His faculties were too vigorous, and his judgment too sound to have suffered him to fail egregiously in any task that he might choose to undertake, however much opposed to his natural bent. His metrical Romances, therefore, though in many respects defective, considered in the light of mere poems, were successful as far as immediate sale and a temporary popularity were the desired objects, because there was a charm in the antiquity-grown-new-again of his subjects, and there was great spirit in the execution ; but no man who has carefully watched the progress of the literature of the present day, can pretend that Scott's writings in verse have

not ceased to be the favorites even of the mob of readers. He never was a poet's poet, and never will be ; and he himself, with that self-knowledge, which is always indicative of a superior understanding, has on more than one occasion expressed his firm conviction, that his poetry did not owe its transient popularity to any great intrinsic excellence, or to any quality that was likely to secure it a long existence. A true poet would never have had this misgiving.

Sir Walter Scott's real strength lay in the line to which he eventually adhered—the *prose romance*. It was here that he stood alone. Nothing in ancient or modern literature is to be compared with his exquisite prose fictions, considered as romances. Fielding was a greater *novelist*—and a profounder artist. His *Tom Jones* is a prose epic, and all his novels show that he had a deeper insight into human character than Scott ; but Scott on the other hand is infinitely more picturesque in his descriptions, and has more genuine pathos, and exhibits a far greater delicacy of mind. The purest hearted readers find nothing to disgust them in the pages of Scott, but there is a coarseness and worldliness in Fielding, and a turn for low and licentious excitement that almost justifies Richardson's bitter sarcasm, that he writes as if he had been bred in a stable-yard, though it was mean and indelicate in the author of *Sir Charles Grandison* to insult Fielding's sister with such an observation. Perhaps Fielding's most indecent scenes are not more offensive to a pure imagination than Richardson's own account of Pamela's escapes from her master's persecution, and the cool calculating spirit in which she made so advantageous a bargain for the surrender of her person.

The most just and discriminative criticism that has yet been published upon the literary character of Sir Walter Scott, is beyond all comparison the critique on Lockhart's book in the *Westminster Review* by Thomas Carlyle. Such a truly philosophical analysis of a writer's genius is rare in these days, when periodical criticism is (speaking generally,) so shallow or so partial, is so much the mere echo of vulgar opinion, or so much the suggestion of party spirit or personal prejudice, and goes to such extremes of censure and laudation, that readers of any sagacity have ceased to place much confidence in its decision.

Amongst others, Mr. Atherstone, the author of "Nineveh," has designated Scott, the Scottish Shakespeare. One is almost tempted on occasions of this nature to imitate the sarcasm of Coleridge, who on being told, that Klopstock was styled the German Milton, exclaimed, "a *very German* Milton indeed !" The Scotch are too fond of these inconsiderate and extravagant comparisons. They call Joanna Baillie the

Female Shakespeare. She is undoubtedly an admirable writer, but not a Shakespeare! Shakespeares are not quite so common. Nature has not produced such a miracle of genius in every age, nor in every country. It is doing a positive injury to the reputation of any modern writer to compare him with the mighty prince of Dramatists; and no one could have been more sensible of the vast inequality of genius between the author of *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello*, and the author of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Marmion*, the *Lady of the Lake*, and the celebrated Scottish prose romances, than Sir Walter Scott himself. He must have been unaffectedly shocked at such critical blasphemy. His sound and modest mind had taken a just measure of its own powers. It is difficult to imagine any thing more honorably characteristic of his frank and manly spirit than his lively sense of the higher poetical genius of many of his contemporaries, at a time too when his own popularity was quite unrivalled. His own estimate of his poetical powers some twenty years ago was a most prophetic anticipation of the general judgment of the present day. No critic who pretends to any discrimination, and who is wholly unbiassed by national partialities, would now pretend for a moment to consider him the equal in *poetical* genius of William Wordsworth, of Shelley, or of Coleridge. Those of his countrymen who hold him up as a Scottish Shakespeare, do not say much for Scottish genius. The English never expect, perhaps never hope for a greater poet than their immortal dramatist, and they may well be contented with such a specimen of their national genius. But if our Northern neighbours are satisfied with Walter Scott, and think their country can never produce a greater poet, they do but little justice to their own nature. Robert Burns, *as a poet*, is infinitely superior to Walter Scott. Compared to the strong lines of the Ayrshire ploughman, the Baronet's octosyllabics are weak and common-place. The former was a truly inspired poet, and as one illustration of the genuineness of his genius, it is only necessary to observe, that his productions have so deeply entered into the hearts and minds of men, that many of his "thoughts that breathe and words that burn" are as familiar to us as the common air. But Scott's poetry is rarely quoted and still more rarely remembered. He has many fresh and animated descriptions in easy and flowing verse, but he has no intensity of passion or profundity of thought. He is deficient in ideality. He interests us in a rapid narrative, but we feel not the spiritual presence of the Muse, and as already observed, we meet with no words steeped in Castalian dews, and colored like

"The golden exhalations of the dawn."

When his admirers point to his best passages, we see nothing but lively details :—no gleams of that “light which never was by sea or land”—no “thoughts that lie too deep for tears”—none of those sudden glimpses of our mysterious nature which flash upon the inward eye, and which when once reflected on the poet’s page must live for ever. Many of the happiest lines of Wordsworth and Coleridge, have a charm for every mind that has a sense of poetical harmony and beauty, and which will shine for ever in “orient hues unborrowed of the sun.”*

Scott’s prose Romances, they are undoubtedly the only true foundation of his fame. The Scotch may well be proud of their countryman as a writer of prose fiction. When he attempted history, as in his *Life of Napoleon*, or criticism, as in his editions of Dryden and Swift, he was an ordinary author and had many superiors. It was as the magician, who at a single stroke of his wand separated the thick curtain of the past, and showed his countrymen their remote ancestors in their antique garments, that his powers were seen to their best advantage.

REV. GEORGE CRABBE,

Born 1754—Died 1832. Reigns—George III., IV. William IV.

As a poet, Crabbe is very differently estimated by different classes of readers. The lovers of the ideal in art are not partial to his style, which is somewhat too literal and homely for those who love poetry for its own sake, and do not seek for that kind of information in verse which may be as well conveyed in prose. His readers are sometimes offended by flat and coarse expressions, slovenly versification, and elaborate portraits of vulgar and uninteresting personages. These faults are more observable in his later publications than his earliest, because when he commenced writing poetry he had less confidence in his own powers, and trod very much in the footsteps of Pope and Goldsmith, whom he sometimes imitated rather more closely than seems consistent with that vigour and originality of mind which Crabbe unquestionably possessed.

* This article was written and printed many years ago. We have since fallen in with the *Memoirs of Wordsworth*, by his Nephew. We learn from that book, that Wordsworth spoke with positive contempt of Scott, as a poet, though he loved and esteemed the man. “As a poet,” says Wordsworth, “Scott cannot live, for he has never written any thing addressed to the immortal part of man. In making amusing stories in verse, he will be superseded by some newer versifier. What he writes in the way of natural description is mere rhyming nonsense.” This concluding sentence goes, we think, beyond the truth. Scott’s descriptions of external nature, though not idealized, are singularly fresh, animated, and distinct.

The writer of a life of Crabbe prefixed to the French edition of his works, has made some very injudicious remarks on the character of his poetry. With the usual partiality of an Editor he exaggerates the poetical excellencies of the subject of his memoir at the expense of other writers, and seems to think that to do justice to Crabbe's descriptive powers it is necessary to underrate those of Thomson, the most accurate and animated of our painter-poets. Crabbe's descriptions, he says, "are not, like those of Thomson, of imaginary but of *real* nature." It is true that the author of *The Seasons* is somewhat more fastidious in the choice of his subjects and more rich in his colouring than Crabbe, but his pictures are not necessarily less faithful because they are more select and more enchanting. It is an unpardonable error to characterize Thomson's minute and exquisitely felicitous descriptions as deficient in fidelity to nature. The critic just quoted seems to think that imagination is a quality essentially opposed to truth; a mistake which, in these times, would hardly be excusable in a school-boy. It is not the prosaic barrenness of a picture that is any test of its truth. Claude's landscapes, over which he has breathed the very soul of poetry, are as true to nature as the most literal and coarse production that ever came from a Dutchman's pencil. The fault of Crabbe is that he is too partial to mean and unpromising subjects. Whatever is poetical must, in a certain sense, be true, but it does not follow that all truth must be poetical. A late writer of considerable critical acumen, has gone so far as to deny to Crabbe the possession of poetical genius, and regrets that he has put a great deal of solid and useful information into a very injudicious form. He thinks that Crabbe's strong good sense and varied knowledgo are of a kind that would have appeared to better advantage in a prose dress. This is carrying the objection to Crabbe to an extreme, though it is by no means so unreasonable as the opposite prejudice of the Editor of the French edition, who appears to think Crabbe's defects preferable to Thomson's beauties. Crabbe's peculiar faults are happily outweighed by his peculiar excellencies. In the midst of his minute and matter-of-fact details, his stern sarcasms, his jingles, quibbles, and alliterations, and his coarse diction, there are gleams of fancy accompanied with indications of a profound knowledge of the heart, a caustic humour, a manly pathos, and a wonderful force and fidelity of description both of human manners and of external nature.

Crabbe resembles no living writer. Of his later predecessors, he reminds us most of Cowper, Pope, and Goldsmith, whose opposite peculiarities are often strangely mingled on the same page. In the touching picture of the Parish Poor-

House, he recalls to our minds the author of *The Deserted Village*, and in the rough, manly vigour with which he dissects such characters as a vain and cold-hearted village apothecary and a sporting clergyman, he seems to have caught the spirit of Cowper in his satiric moods. But he is, on the whole, far less attractive than either of these poets. He is more powerful, but less delicate and refined, than Goldsmith, and though he often describes the same objects, he invariably imbues them with darker colours, and seems determined to omit nothing that is offensive or degrading. Though he resembles Cowper in the force and bitterness of his irony, and the truth of his descriptions, he has little of his poetic ardour or elevation. His verse, which is chiefly confined to the couplet measure, seems a mixture of the several styles of the three writers already mentioned. The school to which Pope* and Goldsmith are considered to have belonged, and from the trammels of which Cowper was the first to escape, was in fashion when Crabbe paid his earliest addresses to the Muse, and he appears to have brought down a portion of the poetical style and creed of that day to the present time. He and Rogers (and perhaps, we may add, Campbell) are the links between what has been called the Lake school, and the poetry of a preceding period.

The strongest objection to Crabbe's poetry is that it tends to lessen our respect for human nature. He takes away from the world the beautifying sunshine of imagination. He sweeps off the bloom from the fruit of life. His is the boldest attempt that has yet been made to render poetry *literal*, as if in direct opposition to Lord Bacon's celebrated compliment to it. "Poetry," says that profound philosopher, serveth and conferreth to magnanimity, morality, and delectation; and therefore it was ever thought to have some participation of divineness, because it doth *raise and erect the mind, by submitting the shows of things to the desires of the mind.*" Crabbe endeavours to reverse this process and to bow the mind to the nature of things. It may be noticed as a curious illustration of the character of his genius that he took no delight in lovely or magnificent landscapes, though he described the most vulgar and disagreeable objects with such Dutch fidelity. He loved science better than art. He had no taste for painting, music, or architecture, but was fond of mathematics, and could at all times find a luxury in the most dry and forbidding cal-

* The authors of the *Rejected Addresses* wittily styled Crabbe a *Pope in wadded stockings*.

culations. When he accompanied Mr. Lockhart to the Salisbury Craigs, he appeared to be more interested in the stratification of the rocks than in the beauty of the landscape. Like Dr. Johnson, he preferred a crowded street to the finest natural scene. These characteristics are not inconsistent with the tone of his poetry in which there is little enthusiasm or imagination,* though it exhibits accurate observation, admirable good sense, and a fine insight into human life.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE,

Born 1772—Died 1834. Reigns—George III., IV. William IV.

It is now the fashion to speak of Coleridge's genius with unlimited laudation, though a few years ago he shared largely in the ridicule and contumely that were showered upon what has been styled, very absurdly, the Lake School of poets.† To this day the severities of our larger reviews respecting these writers are echoed by the great mass of readers, and though the critics themselves have become entirely ashamed of their profane scoffings at true genius, and are now on a totally new tack, they have not erased from the minds of their elder readers the impression of their recanted creed and repented witticisms. Thus we find the critics now worshipping the once ridiculed Wordsworth as if he were a demi-god, but the majority of their perplexed readers can hardly yet get rid of the idea, that he is a miserable scribbler who whines about Betty Foy and a blind boy in a washing tub. It will be a long while, perhaps, before the mob of readers come up with the critics again, and by that time the latter will, in all probability, take another turn, and put their followers as far out as ever. At present the great and glaring error of our public criticism, is its indiscriminate and unqualified idolatry of all who have the least claim to the admiration of their fellows on the score of genius. This cannot last. Nor is there any chance of this system gaining precisely the same degree of support from the public, as that which put the crowd in their own imagination above the most gifted spirits of the time. It flattered the vanity of the meanest reader to find, that he could join in the laugh against a Wordsworth or a Shelley ;

* Coleridge is reported to have said—"There is in Crabbe an absolute defect of high imagination ; he gives me little or no pleasure : yet, no doubt, he has much power of a certain kind, and it is good to cultivate, even at some pains, a catholic taste in literature."—*Coleridge's Table Talk*.

† Because two or three of the fraternity resided near the Lakes in the north of England.

but fools, though they are plentifully endowed with self-conceit, have very little admiration to spare for their superiors. They soon get tired of the worship of greatness ; and there is a spice of ill-nature in the hearts of most men, which secures to the skilful satirist a large number of willing readers. " In the misfortunes of our best friends," says Rochefoucault, " we always find something that does not displease us." Another change will ere long come over the criticism of the day, because it cannot, on its present system, secure the sympathy of the multitude, and because modest truth must at last force its way, and check the absurd extravagance of many of our periodical critics, in their speculations upon men of genius. One of the leading Reviews (a periodical conducted with real talent) has lately been straining all its energies to convince the public that Coleridge, the poet, is the greatest philosopher of modern times, Jeremy Bentham excepted ; and it draws a parallel between these two eminent men, who are as opposite as possible to each other in all intellectual attributes. The Reviewer talks of the vast influence of Coleridge's metaphysical speculations on the character of the age, while the real fact is, that not half a dozen persons can understand them. His thoughts are veiled under such a fantastic cloud of words, and they are in themselves of such a confused and dream-like nature, that it is impossible they should ever exercise any palpable influence on the opinions of his fellow-men. He himself was perfectly conscious of the obscurity of his prose style, and used to endeavour, but in vain, to be more popular and distinct. He whose own mind is perfectly clear, can generally make himself understood by all men who are not greatly below the average intellect of society, and it is an argument against a man's reasoning powers, when he finds that not a soul can fully comprehend him. This is nearly the case with Coleridge, and of most of the German metaphysicians whom he has so unsparingly plundered, for Coleridge, strange to say, is an audacious plagiarist, and has repeated verbatim whole pages from foreign writers. Many intelligent persons have tried, over and over again, to get through his series of Essays entitled *The Friend*, and always found themselves lost in an impenetrable mist. It is absurd to attempt the getting rid of this objection by the old witticism, that Coleridge is not obliged to furnish his reader with an understanding ; because the defect is not in the reader's mind but in the author's style. In the Essays alluded to, he especially avows his intention of simplifying his arguments, and rendering himself popular and intelligible ; but if such was his honest intention, his failure is extraordinary. It will not do to say

that he goes so far into the mysteries of things, that none of his fellow-creatures can follow him. No man can really penetrate into regions so remote and strange that it is impossible for language to convey a distinct idea of them to others. There is not such an inequality of mind amongst us as would admit of this invidious distinction. Does Coleridge dive farther into the innermost depths of a great question than Lord Bacon? And yet Bacon makes himself well understood by men of moderate capacity; and the reason is, that his own mind is clear, and he can, therefore, readily reflect a distinct image of it on the minds of others. Even Jeremy Bentham, the idol of the Reviewer, will furnish us with an apt illustration of our argument. He is really a profound thinker; but then his thoughts are distinct and logical, and, though his style is inelegant, it is not difficult to apprehend his meaning. There is a very absurd and reprehensible disposition in the present day, to take obscurity as a sign of depth. The fact is, that any one man, however gifted, goes in reality so short a distance beyond his fellows in the discovery of moral truth, that a philosopher is sometimes reluctant to give a plain statement of his progress. Strip the mystical philosophy of its gorgeous cloud garments, and there is scarcely a man of common understanding who would not instantly and thoroughly understand it. An obscure author, who is not purposely obscure, loses himself in the thick wood, almost as often as the reader does. If a perfectly clear-minded and clear-spoken person were to make himself master of Coleridge's philosophy, and be called upon, in a mixed company, to give the pith of it, the hearers would probably wonder that so much had been made of it. The present affectation of profundity and the practice of disguising familiar ideas in mysterious language ought assuredly to be discouraged. If a man have a new or profound thought, let him communicate it in the clearest diction he can command, and not endeavor to magnify it by a mist of strange and cabalistic words. Truth will bear nakedness and open daylight, and is none the better for this dusky masquerade. An unsophisticated reader who takes up a modern philosophical speculation, discovers that he has to learn a new language. He cannot make his way through the darkness, and is disheartened by a painful sense of his own want of comprehension. There is a trickery or quackery in all this, that is utterly unworthy of men of real talent. They should put aside the conjurer and mountebank, and let us at once into the secret of their nostrums. Unhappily the rage for metaphysical obscurity is not confined to prose. We have it also in poetry. Readers who can understand Shakespeare

and Milton, find some of the poets of the present day beyond their comprehension. These affected obscurities, it is to be hoped will soon cease to be the fashion, and be at last as much despised by all men of sound judgment as the quibbles and conceits of Donne and Cowley.

Undoubtedly Coleridge was a moral speculator of no ordinary rank, but his imagination too often led him to sail upon a sea of clouds. His poetry sometimes spoiled his metaphysics and his metaphysics sometimes spoiled his poetry. But when he condescended to be simple and distinct, he was an admirable author both in prose and verse. His criticisms on Shakespeare are invaluable. They are truly subtle and original. Nothing can be more chaste, delicate and delightful than his little poem of *Genevieve*. No love-poetry in the language so exquisitely blends the reality of nature with an angelic purity and spirituality. The *Ancient Mariner* is a wonderful production, and is a noble specimen of the author's powers of imagination. *Christabel*, which Byron pronounced a singularly wild and original poem, was left unfinished by the author, and is therefore scarcely to be regarded as a fit subject for criticism. It is stained undoubtedly with some puerilities, and a great deal of affectation, but even in its fragmental state, it bears many beautiful touches of the poet's peculiar genius. His rhymed effusions are exquisitely harmonious, but his blank-verse is occasionally deficient in energy and compactness. This is the fault, indeed, of nearly all the blank-verse of the present day.

MRS. HEMANS,

Born 1794—Died 1835. *Reigns—George III., IV. William IV.*

The poetry of Mrs. Hemans is always elegant, tender, or fanciful, but it rarely displays much force or originality. It was in her short, graceful lyrics that her genius was most successful, for in her plays and longer poems there is a deficiency of truth and strength that is absolutely painful. The smaller pieces, when perused separately, afford unqualified pleasure on account of their feminine grace and exquisite finish, but if read together in a collection, they are calculated to leave an impression of monotony. We soon begin to think that she would have pleased us better if her productions, elegant as they are, had been either somewhat less in number or more varied in their tone. A critic would form a higher opinion of Mrs. Hemans' powers, from the perusal of half a dozen of her poems than half a hundred.

This praise, however, cannot be withheld from her—that no British poetess has written verses of greater melody or refinement. There is perhaps more fancy in the writings of L. E. L. and greatly more force in those of Joanna Baillie, and more simplicity and a deeper pathos in those of Mrs. Southey, but in correctness and grace of style she was without a rival in the list of Lady poets.

SAMUEL ROGERS,

Born 1762—Died——. Reigns—George III., IV. William IV. Victoria.

Amidst all the changes of taste, Rogers still preserves his station, which though not a very high one, is by no means beneath the ambition of a man of taste and genius. His poetry is usually polished with extraordinary care. It is said that scarcely a line of the *Pleasures of Memory* remains in its original form, and that he submitted the whole poem to the repeated revision of his friends. Among the most active of his friendly critics was Richard Sharpe, the brilliant conversationist. The subject of the poem is a singularly happy one, for it must interest all men. The poem itself is unquestionably distinguished for the most exquisite tenderness and grace, though it has not much power. It is modelled chiefly on the stylo of Goldsmith, but Rogers is not a servile imitator, and he evidently speaks from his own heart.

REV. WILLIAM LISLE BOWLES,

Born 1762—Died 1850. Reigns—George III., IV. William IV. Victoria.

Bowles was not one of the greatest of our later poets, but his verse was melodious, fanciful, and tender. His best production was *The Missionary* which contains some very beautiful descriptions, and many passages of very earnest feeling. The productions, however, which first brought him into notice were his Sonnets, which appearing just after those of Charlotte Smith, and combining all the sweetness and tenderness of hers, with a good deal more of thought and fancy than she on any occasion exhibited, won the generous admiration of Coleridge in his early youth and obtained a large share of public notice. Coleridge's repeated expression of his partiality for the poetry of Bowles's has often excited the astonishment of those who have thoughtlessly supposed that every good poet even (in his early youth) must be a good critic. That he overrated its merits is now universally acknowledged. Coleridge was a warm-hearted en-

thusiastic boy when the sonnets of Bowles first met his eye. But even in after years Coleridge sometimes made strange mistakes in criticism owing to the bias of some personal feeling towards the author. Thus he pronounced Pringle's "Afar in the Desert," the finest ode in the English language.

Though Bowles's poetry is, as we have said, generally melodious, fanciful and tender, it is never energetic. It has not much vitality. We doubt if a line of it will live a hundred years.

As a critic he is of the school of the Wartons, who first taught us to prefer nature to art. It was they, too, who taught the English people to distinguish poetry from mere verse, and showed us that clever satire and excellent sense may be compressed into lines of ten syllables without entitling the writer to the name of poet. In their eagerness to separate the different orders of poetry and to prevent the mere satirist from taking his seat on the same bench with the poets of imagination and feeling, they sometimes did injustice to the poetry of Pope and other writers of the same class. Though Pope in his *Essay on Criticism* and elsewhere sometimes did little more than put prosaic thoughts into pointed couplets, there are passages in his *Rape of the Lock* and *Eloisa to Abelard* that place him very high in the rank of British poets.

Bowles's edition of Pope was a public disappointment. It was spoiled not only by too strong a prejudice against the kind of poetry in which that writer chiefly excelled, but by something that looks almost like a feeling of personal animosity towards the man. We still want a good edition of Pope. Neither Warburton's, nor Warton's, nor Bowles's, nor Roscoe's satisfied the expectations of the public. Warburton's notes were utterly tasteless; Warton's damned good verses with faint praise; Bowles's were too spiteful; and Roscoe's too indiscriminately laudatory.

We believe that for several years before his death, poor Bowles had been in the same state as Southey, whose mind died long before his body. The later poets of England, though of a class of men proverbially sensitive and irritable, are or were long livers. Bowles, Moore, Southey, Wordsworth, Rogers, Crabbe, Sotheby, and Montgomery have all enjoyed a lease of life much beyond the average of human existence.

Bowles's latest publication appeared in 1837. It is entitled, "*Scenes and Shadows of Days Departed, with Poems from Youth to Age, by the Rev. W. L. Bowles.*" The volume appears to contain no poems that had not seen the light in his previous publications. The author's very numerous alterations and corrections are worthy of particular notice,

inasmuch as they afford a remarkable illustration of the danger of all attempts on the part of a poet to improve the warm effusions of his youth or middle life, in the winter of his age. The alterations are any thing but improvements. When the public ear is once accustomed to the tone and diction of a poem, an alteration even for the better is often very ungraciously received, but when it improves neither the sense nor the metre, or when these are positively injured, nothing can be more repulsive to the reader or more unfortunate for the author. It may be as well to select a few examples of the manner in which Bowles has robbed his youthful Muse of some of her most attractive graces.

In a sonnet addressed to TIME, occur the following lines :—

“ O Time ! who know’st a lenient hand to lay
Softest on sorrow’s wound, and slowly thence—
Soothing to sad repose the weary sense—
Stealest the *long-forgotten pang* away ;
Thee, would I call my only hope at last,
And think—when thou hadst dried the bitter tear
That flow’d in vain o’er all my soul held dear,—
I might look back on *youthful sufferings past*,
To meet life’s peaceful evening with a smile.”

In the original state of the above passage, instead of Time stealing a *long-forgotten pang*, (which as it is no pang at all, cannot be stolen) he was represented, with far more poetry and truth, as stealing, unperceived, a pang greatly softened by his lenient hand.

“ The *faint pang* stealest *unperceived* away.”

The beautiful sonnet on the Bells at Ostend has been injured in a similar manner. The following is a passage from it as it stood originally :—

“ And now, along the white and level tide
They sling their melancholy music wide :
Bidding me many a tender thought recall
Of summer days and those delightful years
When by my native stream in life’s fair prime,
The mournful magic of their mingling chime
First waked my wondering childhood into tears.”

For the lines in italics we now have

“ Of happy hours departed, and those years,
When from an antique tower ere life’s fair prime, &c.

In a sonnet on the river Rhine, there are equally injudicious alterations. In the first edition was the following picturesque and pleasing passage :—

“ On the *sparkling Rhine*
We bounded, and the *white waves* round the prow
In murmurs parted ;—varying as we go,
Lo ! the woods open, and the rocks retire,
Some convent’s ancient walls, or glistening spire
Mid the bright landscape’s track unfolding slow.”

This has been altered and injured in the following manner :—

“ When on the Rhine
We sailed, and heard the waters round the prow
In murmurs parting ;—varying as we go,
Rocks after rocks come forward and retire,
As some grey convent-wall, or sunlit spire
Starts up, along the banks unfolding slow.”

Here the Rhine no longer “*sparkles*,” the bark no longer “*bounds*,” the waves no longer “*whiten*.” With what a torpedo touch is the original picture deadened ! Then again, instead of that elastic and animated line

“ Lo ! the woods open, and the rocks retire,”

we have one in which we are coldly informed, that the rocks with great formality successively came forward and retired, while all allusion to the opening woods is omitted. But to make amends for the stately gravity of the rocks, some old, grey, heavy convent wall *starts up* at once in a very lively and unexpected style, instead of coming slowly into view as in the first description. Towards the close of the same sonnet we have these lines in the original :

“ There on the *woodland’s* side,
The *shadowy* sunshine pours its streaming tide ;
While *Hope* enchanted with the scene so *fair*,
Would wish to linger many a summer’s day,
Nor heeds how fast the prospect winds away.”

This, unhappily, has not escaped the author’s rage for improvement. He is determined not to *let well alone*. Here is what he considers the more perfect version :—

“ There on the *vineyard’s* side,
The *bursting* sunshine pours its *streaming* tide ;
While *Grief* forgetful amid scenes so *fair*,
Counts not the hours of a long summer’s day,
Nor heeds how fast the prospect winds away.”

The bold, but felicitous expression of *shadowy sunshine*, which a poet or a painter will at once readily comprehend as descriptive of the strong light and shade of woodland scenery on a fine day, is exchanged for a comparatively commonplace and worthless epithet, and which is particularly inelegant in its present position, where we have a *tide* or *stream*, *streaming*, *bursting* and *pouring*. Then again instead of the lively and appropriate image of Hope, enchanted with the scene, and desiring to linger in it many a summer’s day, that agreeable personage is thrust away to make room for Grief, who is quite out of her place in such a cheerful landscape.

MISS JOANNA BAILLIE,

Born 1764—Died 1851. Reigns—George III., IV. William IV. Victoria.

No British female has written such vigorous poetry as Miss Baillie's. Her genius was masculine ; but in private life she had all the gentler qualities that peculiarly adorn her sex.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH,

Born 1770—Died 1851. Reigns—George III., IV. William IV. Victoria.

A few years ago, it would have been a work of supererogation to notice those defects of Wordsworth which render it impossible for a true critic to elevate him to the very highest seat in the temple of the Muses. But Wordsworth's position as an author is greatly changed, and Jeffrey's critique on the *Excursion* is now generally referred to as an illustration of the blindness of reviewers to the merits of poets whose works are new or unpopular. That critique, however, with some defects, had nevertheless great merit. It was honest and sagacious. Though the fantastic puerilities of the poet were severely ridiculed, his better qualities were, at the same time, most liberally acknowledged, and most amply and judiciously illustrated with favorable specimens. But if we are to believe the criticism of the present day, Wordsworth is almost a faultless writer. As it was formerly the fashion to *run him down*, it is now the fashion to *run him up*; and as the mob of cuckoo critics once recognized his defects alone, they now see nothing but his beauties. Perhaps, therefore, an attempt to speak of him as he is, nothing extenuating nor setting down aught in malice, may not be ill-timed or unacceptable.

The prominent fault of Wordsworth is a want of force and precision. He is often more diffuse and feeble than might have been supposed possible in a genuine poet ; and the worst of it is, that he is not satisfied to let a simple common-place pass at its true value ; but ushers it forth with the air of a philosophical discovery. He lays an emphasis upon trifles. If Wordsworth would write only when the true inspiration is upon him, or would permit some judicious friend to draw his pen through every line that is unworthy of his genius, he would meet with a very different reception from the general reader, who will rarely take the trouble to search for thinly scattered fruit in a vast mass of foliage.* Byron and Moore and Campbell are more popular,

* The first part of this article was written in the poet's life-time.

partly because they are more equal writers. They rarely fall strikingly below the level of their genius. We may take up almost at hazard any one of their poems, however long or short, and regard it as a characteristic specimen of what they could produce ;—but Wordsworth too often writes in a style that might justify a person who was but partially acquainted with his works in pronouncing him a singularly feeble thinker, and a mediocre versifier. His warmest admirers would hesitate to give a *random specimen* of his manner, because if he is the best poet living he is also the worst. In his happier hour he surpasses every other poet of the present day. We find in his pages, what we do not find elsewhere in the poetry of these times, those profound thoughts and golden images which leave an indelible impression on the mind,—which breathe of immortality. He is a poet that every true thinker must love. No imaginative writer of modern times has made a greater impression on the leading intellects of his country, and while the mob of readers confine their attention to his very obvious faults, and ridicule an intellect that is as much above their own as the stars are above the earth, the refined and ingenuous student is enchanted with the almost angelic purity of the poet's sentiments, the richness and delicacy of his fancy, his fine appreciation of truth and beauty, and the felicity of those occasional passages in which the most exquisite images are embodied in the happiest and most harmonious words. Compared with the *finest parts* of Wordsworth, some of our most popular poets of latter times seem either vulgar and melodramatic, or finical and meretricious. Some of his contemporaries are infinitely better fitted to delight the public in general ; because they do not seek exclusively to please those who love thought and poetry for their own sake, but give striking narratives that may excite the most prosaic reader ; because too, they never shock him with gross inequalities, and always pay him the compliment of doing their best. They often seem better poets than Wordsworth, but when the latter is at his noblest elevation, he mounts into higher and purer regions, and leaves all his contemporaries far behind him.

Wordsworth is not likely to become a very popular poet, though portions of his writings will, probably, hereafter, be more extensively known and be better understood by ordinary readers than they are at present. Many of his fine aphorisms, and some of his more obvious beauties of thought and style, have already been familiarized to the public mind by repeated quotation. The more frequently Wordsworth's best productions are studied by refined readers, the more they are

admired. Genuine poetry is never stale ; every new perusal is accompanied with a fresh delight, and an additional store of pleasant associations. Those, however, who can really enjoy the pure spirit of poetry, wholly unmixed with baser matter, form a very small class indeed. To make it popular without the aid of narrative, it is necessary to season it highly with glittering conceits, turgid truisms, and strong excitements.

Wordsworth has passed his life in rural retirement. His home is a hermitage. Though this sort of life is favorable to self-reflection or learned research, or abstract reasoning, or metaphysical speculation, it is ill calculated for the poet who is ambitious to describe human life, and to make men's familiar associations the subject of his verse. A daily communion with still lakes, and misty mountains, and waving trees, and gentle waterfalls, may qualify a poet to describe with accuracy the peculiarities of external nature ; but Wordsworth aims at something better than a mere representation of land and water. "Pure description," he well knows, should rather constitute the ornament, than the main character or material of a poem of lofty pretension. No sound critic, nor any poet of high genius, has adopted the narrow theory of Darwin, that poetry is all picture, and nothing else. It is not to be denied, that when images of inanimate nature are associated with rich fancies and profound meditation, they become exquisite material for the poet's art ; and there are poets of no ordinary excellence who have confined their genius to such sources of inspiration. Wordsworth is one of these.

As a meditative and descriptive poet, he has no living equal. But his thoughts and pictures would never place him by the side of the four great poets who stand at the head of English poetical literature—namely Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, and Milton. These were not merely rural painters or recluse philosophers ; nor were they egotistical echoes of themselves. Their creations were not all after their own image. They mixed freely with their fellow-creatures, they beheld the working of the human heart in cities, and under those states of tumultuous excitement, when the most secret traits of character are developed ; they sympathized with all classes and conditions of men, and learned how to pourtray emotions different from their own, and to communicate their original conceptions to the minds of others. There is a largeness of mind, and a versatility of power, and a truth and extent of insight indicated in the works of these mighty poets, which we look for in vain in the retired and fantastical theorist of the Lakes, who, when he turns from natural images and at-

tempts to pourtray human nature, exhibits, under the rags of a Cumberland pedlar, the solemn William Wordsworth. Lord Byron was not wholly wrong, after all, when he spoke contemptuously of the *Excursion*. It is garrulous egotism—it is egotism in disguise, for it pretends to something of a dramatic character; but we never lose sight of the poet. In spite of occasional passages of pure and beautiful sentiment, of gentle pathos, of deep thought, and of a felicity of description unequalled by any other poet of these times, the poem is inexpressibly tedious, from its minuteness of detail, and its general feebleness and verbosity.

The leading defects of Wordsworth's genius indicate, apparently, a certain one-sidedness of mind—(partly perhaps the result of his recluse life)—and a sort of arrogant self-sufficiency that no writer in the English language has dared to exhibit to so great an extent or in so barefaced a manner. Most poets select their best efforts for the public eye, and do not imagine that they are at all hours under the inspiration of the muse. A book ought to be the *best part* of an author's mind—not *the whole of it*. A poet is not always a poet. He has his prosaic side, and his moments of ordinary thought and feeling, when he is in no degree distinguishable from other men. But Wordsworth writes at all times and under all conditions, and seems to fancy that all he writes is of equal value. He, therefore takes no pains to select or condense his images and thoughts. Instead of making a careful selection of his best ideas in their best form, he frequently presents us with the very dregs of his daily life, and with an air of as much emphasis and solemnity as if it were the concentrated essence of his noblest inspiration. The least hint that these careless or infelicitous effusions of the prose part of his nature are inferior to the best productions of his best hours, is received with a burst of scorn and indignation. Because the public laughed at his Peter Bell and his Betty Foy, and Goody Blake, and Harry Gill, he tried his best to prove the monstrous position, that no true poet could possibly be popular in his life-time.

Of the style in which he speaks of himself, and of his critics—"men of palsied imaginations and indurated hearts"—the following paragraph from one of his prefaces, is an amusing example:—

And if, bearing in mind the many poets distinguished by this prime quality (imagination,) whose names I omit to mention; yet justified by a recollection of the insults which the Ignorant, the Incapable, and the Presumptuous have heaped upon these and my other writings, I may be permitted to anticipate the judgment of posterity upon myself; I shall declare (censurable, I grant, if the notoriety of the fact above stated does not justify me) that I have given, in these unfavourable times, evidence of exertions of this faculty upon its worthiest objects, the external universe, the moral and religious sentiments of man, his natural affections and acquired passions; which have the same ennobling ten-

dency as the productions of men, in this kind, worthy to be holden in undying remembrance.

From the concluding sentence of the above extract, the reader would imagine, that a poet who could thus perform the part of his own trumpeter, would hardly care much for the assaults of his enemies; but the passionate and bitter scorn—(a clear proof that the author's withers are not unwrung)—with which he treats "the Ignorant, the Incapable and the Presumptuous," who have dared to laugh at the Lyrical Ballads, compels us to acknowledge, that extreme self-satisfaction is not always an impenetrable coat of armour against the hostility of critics.*

It may now be as well, perhaps, to quote specimens of the sort of poetry which Wordsworth thinks it prudent to publish, and infamous to censure. Here is a poem which, we suppose according to the author, is "worthy to be holden in undying remembrance." We give it entire:—

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS,

Showing how the practice of Lying may be taught.

I have a boy of five years old,
His face is fair and fresh to see
His limbs are cast in beauty's mould
And dearly he loves me.

One morn we strolled on our dry walk,
Our quiet home all full in view,
And held such intermitted talk
As we were wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran
I thought of Kilve's delightful shore,
Our pleasant home when Spring began
A long long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
To think, and think, and think again;
With so much happiness to spare
I could not feel a pain.

My Boy was by my side, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress,
And oftentimes I talked to him
In very idleness.

The young lambs ran a pretty race,
The morning sun shone bright and warm,
"Kilve," said I, "was a pleasant place
And so is Liswyn farm?"

* Lord Jeffrey, by his critique on the *Excursion*, has sunk the character of Scottish criticism to a state of the lowest degradation in the eyes of Wordsworth, who now speaks of Scotland as "a soil to which this sort of weed (a bad critic) seems natural."

" And tell me had you rather be"
 I said, *and held him by the arm,*
 " At Kilve's smooth shore, by the green sea,
 Or here at Liswyn farm ?"

In careless mood, he looked at me
 Whilst still *I held him by the arm,*
 And said " At Kilve I'd rather be
 Than here at Liswyn farm."

" Now, little Edward, say why so ?
 My little Edward, tell me why ?—
 " I cannot tell, I do not know"—
 " Why this is strange," said I !

" For here are woods and green hills warm :
 There surely must some reason be
 Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
 For Kilve by the green sea."

At this my Boy hung down his head,
 He blushed with shame, nor made reply
 And *five* times to the child I said
 " Why, Edward, tell me why ?"

His head he raised ; there was in sight—
 It caught his eye, he saw it plain—
 Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
 A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,
 And thus to me he made reply
 " At Kilve there was no weathercock,
 And that's the reason why."

Oh dearest, dearest Boy ! my heart
 For better lore would seldom yearn
 Could I but teach the hundredth part
 Of what from thee I learn.*

The needless repetition, of the simple fact, that the father, in speaking to his son, *held him by the arm*—the importance attached to a child's attempt to explain the grounds of its preference of one place to another, or to get rid of an idle and importunate question (exactly *five* times asked)—and the exaggerated moral, in which the poet pretends that he learns a hundred times more from the pestered boy's reply, than he (the poet) with all his philosophy could teach, is peculiarly characteristic of Wordsworth's worst style when he aims at a sort of innocent simplicity of manner, combined with an assumption of profound thought, and produces an effect that is, in reality, supremely fantastic and ridiculous.

* What is it that the poet learns ? and in what way does the poem show (according to the title) *how the practise of lying may be taught* ? Landon asks, " if the lad told a lie, why praise him so ? and if he spoke the obvious truth, that has he taught the father ?"

Every thing that Wordsworth sees—every thing that occurs to him—the most vulgar sights, the most trivial incidents, assume, to his own mind, a degree of importance that is utterly incomprehensible to men in general. He meets a beggar woman and her brats in his morning walk. He must inform posterity of it. He carefully records in verse, a fact which is to be held in “undying remembrance,” that she wore a long drab-coloured cloak, a white cap on her head and a mantle reaching to her feet, but conscientiously confesses that he “could not know” (that is without an indecorous enquiry or examination) what sort of garment was under the mantle.

“I cannot,” says Wordsworth, in one of his Prefaces, “be insensible of the present outcry against the triviality and meanness both of thought and language, which *some of my contemporaries (! !)* have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonorable to the writer’s own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend, at the same time, that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses, the poems in this volume will be found distinguished, at least, by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy purpose.” *The outcry against some of his contemporaries for triviality and meanness !* This is rich, indeed. Is there any modern poet, who has been so assailed with universal ridicule for this very fault, as Wordsworth himself, or who has so keenly felt or so loudly complained of the objection? To a charge of triviality and meanness, too many of his lyrical ballads most justly exposed him, though some few of them are, undoubtedly, amongst the most beautiful little poems in the language.

There is a fault in Wordsworth that has not, perhaps, been noticed by the critics, but must have been often felt by the reader, which is a trick of inserting prosaic matter, or qualifying clauses, in the midst of passages intended to be elevated and poetical. The following are examples. With a very little trouble, a thousand more might be selected from the pages of the same writer :—

My father was a good and pious man,
An honest man by honest parents bred,
And I believe that, soon as I began
To lisp, he made me kneel beside my bed,
And in his hearing there my prayers I said.

—
O happy time of youthful lovers (*thus
My story may begin*) O balmy time,
In which a love-knot on a lady’s brow
Is fairer than the fairest star in heaven !

It seemed a day
(I speak of one from many singled out)
 One of those heavenly days which cannot die.

And in our vacant mood,
 Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft
 Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,
 That skimmed the surface of the dead calm lake,
 Suddenly halting now—a lifeless stand!
 And starting off again with freak as sudden,
 In all its sportive wanderings, all the while
 Making report of an invisible breeze
 That was its wings, its chariot, and its horse,
 Its playmate—*rather say*, its moving soul.

Thou
 Art pacing to and fro the vessel's deck
 In some far region. Here, while o'er my head,
 At every impulse of the moving breeze
 The fir-grove murmurs, with a sea-like sound,
 Alone I tread this path; *for aught I know*,
 Timing my steps to thine.

— The intended pile, which would have been
 Some quaint odd plaything of elaborate skill,
 So that, *I guess*, the linnet and the thrush,
 And other little builders who dwell here,
 Had wondered at the work.

Yet further—many, I believe, there are
 Who live a life of virtuous decency:
 Men who can hear the Decalogue, and feel
 No self-reproach.

EPITAPH.

Not without heavy grief did he
 On whom the duty fell (*for at that time*
 The father sojourned in a distant land.)
 Deposit in the hollow of this Tomb
 A brother's child, most tenderly beloved!

THE FLOWER OF LOVE LIES BLEEDING.

E'en thus stoops
 (Sentient by Grecian sculpture's marvellous power)
 Thus leans, with hanging brow and body bent
 Earthward, in uncomplaining languishment
 The dying gladiator. Lo, sad flower!
 (*'Tis fancy guides me willing to be led,*
Though by a slender thread.)
 So drooped Adonis, bathed in sanguine dew,
 Of his death wound.

The book which in my hand
 Had opened of itself (*for it was swollen*
With searching damp, and seemingly had lain
To the injurious elements exposed
From week to week) I found to be a work
 In the French tongue, a novel of Voltaire—
 His famous Optimist.

These prosaic *asides** and cool explanations, give a check to the reader's emotion, and create an impression that the author himself is not in earnest. In almost any other writer we should attribute the fault to an essentially unpoetical temperament, and even in his case, it certainly indicates a want of passion. He has rather too much command over his own feelings to be always sure of carrying the reader with him : and on this account nothing can be less effective than some of his Odes. Nature never intended him for a lyrical or a dramatic poet.

His tragedy of *The Borderers* is a conspicuous failure and even his best Ode, his "Intimations of Immortality from recollections of early childhood," though it contains many very exquisite lines, is not strictly lyrical in its spirit and is often sadly deficient in condensation of thought and harmony of versification. This Ode has been extravagantly over praised. Such lines as the following are utterly unfit for a place in an ambitious lyrical composition.

And all the earth is gay ; land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday.

Oh, evil day ! If I were *sullen*
While earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning
And the children are culling on every side
In a thousand vallies far and wide
Fresh flowers ; while the sun is warm, &c

Not in entire *forgetfulness*,
And not in utter *nakedness*.

A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral.

* They remind us of Bentley's prosaic alterations of Milton :

Original.

Our torments also, may, in length of time,
Become our elements.

Improved by Bentley.

Then, *as was well observed*, our torments may
Become our elements.

Not for these I raise,
 The song of thanks and praise ;
 But for those obstinate questionings
 Of sense and outward things
 Fallings from us, ravishings
 Blank mis-givings of a creature, &c.,

In the course of his travels, Wordsworth happens to meet a gaily-dressed negro woman in a coach. She had been "driven" from France:—this the poor outcast "*did* declare" to the poet, and the poet "*did*" think necessary to declare the same to the public:—

SONNET.

We had a fellow passenger who came
 From Calais with us, gaudy in array,—
 A negro woman like a lady gay,
 Yet silent as a woman fearing blame.
 Dejected, meek, yea pitiable tame.
 She sat, from notice turning not away,
 But on our proffered kindness still did lay
 A weight of languid speech,—or at the same
 Was silent, motionless in eyes and face.
 She was a negro woman driven from France,
 Rejected, like all others of that race,
 Not one of whom may now find footing there ;
 This the poor outcast did to us declare,
 Nor murmured at the unfeeling ordinance.

This feeble, common-place, matter-of-fact statement has no claim to be called poetry, nor should it be called a sonnet. It is "a weight of languid speech." Of all poems, the sonnet demands the most finish and compression. The termination, though it need not be absolutely pointed or epigrammatic, ought to satisfy the ear and mind with a sense of completeness ; the music and the sentiment ought to be brought to a close, so correspondent and entire, that the reader should have no reason to suppose the poet has left any thing unsaid which it was his intention to say. The sonnet is not like a single stanza out of its place and requiring a successor. It is, or ought to be, complete in itself. A thought, or image, or incident, which cannot, without injury, be compressed within the limits of the sonnet, should be embodied in some other form of verse. The substance of a sonnet, like that of an egg, should exactly occupy the space allotted to it. Wordsworth's sonnets, admirable as many of them are, have been the subject of very indiscriminate laudation amongst the critics of the day. They are often feeble, prosaic, and imperfect. Perhaps about ten or a dozen in each centenary are as fine, or even finer, than any in the language : but the rest, unhappily, are conspicuous failures, being deficient in elevation, strength, unity, purpose and compactness.

Wordsworth's matchless self-complacency renders it quite impossible for him to undertake the difficult task of self-criticism. What a blessing, therefore, it would be to this most unequal writer, and not less to himself than to the public, if he could be persuaded to submit all his performances to the unsparing pruning-knife of some judicious friend ! Wordsworth's blank-verse is often quite as defective as his worst sonnets. It is wanting in some of the essential qualities of that noble measure. Mere prose, even elegant prose, divided by the printer into lines of ten syllables without rhyme, is not blank-verse. Here and there a line may be admitted into good blank-verse, that would not be out of its place in good prose ; but the general character of the versification ought not to resemble the style of a prose tale or essay ; for though elevation or beauty or force of thought and imagery may confer true dignity on very simple and colloquial diction, there are, in every long poem, certain subordinate or connecting passages that are necessarily somewhat undertoned, and require, in the case of blank-verse, considerable compression, great variety in the music, some degree of inversion, and some strength and firmness of movement, to sustain its character, and rescue and distinguish it from mere prose. But Wordsworth pours himself out with such a " fatal facility," and is so easily pleased with his own performances, that no true poet before him has ever written so much plain prose in measured syllables. This accounts for the extraordinary and tedious length of his *Excursion*, which forms only a portion of a poem entitled *The Recluse*. If a poet once take it into his head that all he thinks, and feels, and does, and all he writes and publishes is of equal dignity and equal interest and value, he may very soon produce waggon-loads of verse very easy to write, but very hard to read. Let his genius, however, be what it may, posterity will be apt to fling aside the entire ponderous cargo with disgust and scorn. It will never take the trouble to hunt through vast quartos of versified prose for occasional passages of even the most resplendent merit, nor, in the crowded vehicle of fame, give place to a traveller, who packs up his goods, however precious, in vast unwieldy bales of straw and cotton. These remarks are not to be applied in their full force to Wordsworth in particular, but are meant to support a general principle, against which, however, he has too often sinned in a manner that cannot but grieve all those of his admirers whose adherence is of value. As I do not wish to weary the reader with unfavorable quotations, but a single specimen shall be given of the sort of prose in verse to which Wordsworth

ventures to give the name of poetry, and to publish as worthy of his high and unquestionable genius.

Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up ;
 And now when he had reached his eighteenth year,
 He was his comfort and his daily hope.
While in this sort the simple household lived
 From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
 Distressful tidings. Long before the time
 Of which I speak, the shepherd had been bound
 In surety for this brother's son, a man
 Of an industrious life and ample means.
 But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
 Had pressed upon him,—and old Michael now
 Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
 A grievous penalty, but little less
 Than half his substance.

* * * * *

There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself :
 He was Parish boy—at the Church door
 They made a gathering for him, shillings and pence,
 And half-pennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
 A basket which they filled with pedlar's wares,
 And with the basket on his arm, the lad
 Went up to London, found a master there,
 Who out of many chose the trusty boy
 To go and overlook his merchandize
 Beyond the seas : where he grew wondrous rich
 And left estates and monies to the poor,
 And at his birth-place built a chapel floored
 With marble, which he sent from foreign lands.
 These thoughts, and *many others of like sort*,
 Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel.
 Her countenance brightened. The old man was glad,
 And thus resumed :—Well, Isabel ! this scheme
These two days has been meat and drink to me.

This diffuse and feeble versified prose affords an illustration of a characteristic fault in Wordsworth. He takes too much notice of non-essentials. He is too fond of such minute explanations and familiar details as may properly be included in a plain prose narrative, but which are quite out of place in poetical composition. Poetry is truth—but it is not *all* truth that is poetry. It may tell of the loss or acquisition of a fortune, and the consequent emotion of grief or joy ; but it does not present an account-current to the reader.

When Wordsworth wrote his lyrical ballads, he was wedded to his theory about simplicity in sentiment and diction ; but his very anxiety to arrive at the end in view defeated his purpose. A predetermined simplicity in poetry is apt to end like preconcerted wit in conversation—in affectation and dullness. Men who write naturally, do so without an effort. Shakespeare and Burns have never been surpassed in strokes of simple nature, but they had no theory to support, and did not require to write learned essays to prove that their simpli-

city was genuine. They had not to complain that men ridiculed or disdained their verses, or that their critics were persons of "palsied imaginations and indurated hearts." Their simplicity shocks no man, and is felt and appreciated by every reader of ordinary capacity and unsophisticated taste. When the critics of the day attempt to support the claims of the poet of simple nature by metaphysical speculation and elaborate and ingenious theories, they indirectly condemn their client. Their praise is the severest satire. They boast that it is only the gifted few who can understand the poet, who yet pretends to have "fitted to metrical arrangement the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation." The vulgar were shamed into a pretended admiration. It reminds us of a story repeated by one of the contributors to *Blackwood*. Two rogues pretended to weave a tissue of gold and silk for a king. The fellows gave out that its exquisite beauty was invisible to fools. These weavers knew human nature. They threw an empty shuttle through an empty loom and the connoisseurs and critics were in ecstasies. The fabric was pronounced superb, because no man was willing to be looked upon as a fool.

Wordsworth commenced his career as a poet with a theory about simplicity, which in practise he carried to an extreme that called down upon him for many years incessant showers of ridicule and sarcasm. He might possibly have continued to this day to pour forth his favorite absurdities with a grave and majestic air of untroubled self-complacency, if he had not been at last weaned from them by the example of some of the most eminent of his contemporaries, who rushed into those cloudy regions of mystical philosophy, which for some years past, have been regarded as the only legitimate haunt of the muses. The most obstinate and self-dependent genius is more or less affected by the spirit of his age and the manners of those who exercise their powers in the same department of art or science. Though Wordsworth began by writing for little children, in a style *caviare* to the mature mind, he now addresses his poetry to the subtlest metaphysicians, and in a tone the most pompous and consequential. He now too condescends to use those ordinary ornaments and that conventional phraseology which he originally rejected with so much disdain. In his more ambitious blank-verse productions, he is often quite as stilted as Akenside himself, while in his smaller rhymed poems, he uses all the common artifices of versification. The dissimilarities of style and character in the various works of this writer are quite surprising. We

ind a triviality and meanness of subject and treatment contrasted with the most solemn lessons of the philosopher, and the most homely diction with the most ambitious. These inconsistencies can only be reconciled or understood by a study of the history and character of Wordsworth's mind, with a constant reference to the changes that have come over the literature of the period. His works themselves, if perused without the light which is to be derived from this study and reference, would puzzle the most discerning critic, who should wish to form a clear conception of the writer's genius.

It is not true that what is called the real language of men in vulgar life, is the fittest for poetry, but even if it were true, Wordsworth's practise would not always support his theory, for no rustic thinks and speaks in real life like rustics in the pages of Wordsworth. His simplicity is not the simplicity of a flesh and blood ploughman, nor do we meet in real life with such a philosophical pedlar as he has chosen for the hero of the *Excursion*. Milton's language is not the language of common life. Even the simplicity of Burns and Shakespeare—though so much nearer to real life than Wordsworth's—is not identically that of the vulgar. It is not a literal report of men's actual words. It has not the sort of truth which is looked for in a book like Wright's *Mornings in Bow-street*. So long as the feeling is given, the poet is not anxious to preserve errors and peculiarities of grammar and pronunciation. He is not disposed to give a picture of things barely as they are. His imagination tinges the humblest objects, as the sun touches with hues of glory the most worthless weed, or the stump of an old tree. The muse

Turns

Bodies to spirit by sublimation strange.

We feel that there is an essential difference between the language of poetry and that of prose, though it is difficult to define it. Poetical words at once kindle poetical associations—prosaic words bring down the mind to matters of fact. If a common rustic and a highly educated man were called upon to describe a scene in nature, or an event connected with human emotion, which would give us the most true and therefore poetical statement? Assuredly not the first. The rustic's ideas are narrow and confused, and his vocabulary limited and mean.

But enough of Wordsworth's defects. It is an unpleasing task to notice them. Let us now turn to the brighter side of the picture. Though Wordsworth is not in the first rank of British poets, he is undoubtedly the greatest poet

of his time. He cannot take his seat by the side of Milton, but his throne is higher than that of any other living potentate of Parnassus. His poetry has not the passion of Byron, the rich dreaminess of Coleridge or Shelley, the sparkling fancy of Moore, or the energy and precision of Campbell ; but in calm depth of thought, and in the occasional production of those separate and independent lines or stanzas which at once become an imperishable addition to the spiritual wealth of the country, he leaves them all far behind him. In his truly classical *Luodamia* there is an

Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,

which makes a great deal of our popular poetry seem miserably common-place or meretricious. Even in the too prolix *Excursion* there are passages of surpassing beauty, and it is deplorable to think how much they are hidden from the general eye by the mass of inferior matter with which they are connected. If any reader should think that we have been a little too free in some of our comments on this poet, he will not, we hope, accuse us of ill will or unfairness. To show that we have no desire to leave upon the reader's mind an unfavourable opinion of Wordsworth, we have reserved our praise for the conclusion of this critique, and follow it up with a selection of a number of the most exquisite gems that are to be found scattered over his works. It will be difficult to look at them without feeling that warm admiration towards the gifted writer which makes all critical objections seem almost equally disagreeable and impertinent. But it is the duty of criticism to point out defects as well as excellencies, for nothing is so apt to injure the taste of a nation as an indiscriminate laudation even of its best writers.

SONNET COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

Earth has not any thing to show more fair ;
 Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
 A sight so touching in its majesty :
This city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning ; silent, bare,
 Ships, towers, domes, theatres and temples lie
 Open unto the fields and to the sky ;
 All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
 Never did sun more beautifully steep
 In his first splendour, valley, rock or hill ;
 Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !
The river glided at his own sweet will ;
Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep
And all that mighty heart is lying still !

THE WAGGONER IN A STORM.

The rain rushed down, the road was battered,
 As with the force of billows shattered ;

The horses are dismayed, nor know
 Whether they should stand or go ;
 And Benjamin is *groping* near them,
 Sees nothing and can scarcely hear them,
 He is astounded,—wonder not
 With such a charge in such a spot ;
 Astounded in the mountain gap,
 By peals of thunder, clap on clap ;
 And many a terror-striking flash ;—
And somewhere, as it seems a crash
Among the rocks ; with weight of rain,
And sullen motions, long and slow,
That to a dreary distance go—
 Till breaking in upon the dying strain,
 A rending o'er his head begins the fray again !

A HARE.

The hare is running races in her mirth ;
 And with her feet, she from the plashy earth
 Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun,
 Runs with her all the way wherever she doth run.

A RILL.

————— It quivers down the hill,
 Furrowing its shallow way with dubious will.

A STORM.

————— Untimely thunders growl ;
 While trees, *dim-seen*, in frenzied numbers tear
 The lingering remnants of their yellow hair :
 And shivering wolves, surprized with darkness, howl,
 As if the sun were not.

A HAPPY WANDERER.

Love he had found in huts where poor men lie ;
 His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
 The silence that is in the starry sky,
 The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

EVENING.

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free :
 The holy time is quiet as a nun
 Breathless with adoration !

ANOTHER DESCRIPTION OF EVENING.

————— While day's purple eye
 Is gently closing with the flowers of spring ;
 When e'en the motion of an angel's wing
 Would interrupt the intense tranquillity
 Of silent hills and more than silent sky.

POETS.

Blessings be with them and eternal praise
 The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
 Of truth and pure delight, by heavenly lays !
 Oh ! might my name be numbered amongst theirs,
 Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

THE MUSES.

A cheerful life is what the Muses love,
A soaring spirit is their prime delight.

HUMAN CHANGE AND IMPERFECTION.

————— But alas,
Vain earth ! false world ! Foundations must be laid
In Heaven ; for midst the wreck of *is* and *was*,
Things incomplete and purposes betrayed
Make sadder transits o'er truth's mystic glass
Than noblest objects utterly decayed.

RAPIDITY OF TIME.

————— As a dart
Cleaves the blank air, Life flies : now every day
Is but a glimmering spoke in the swift wheel
Of the revolving week.

A POET.

And who is he, with modest looks
And clad in homely russet brown ?
He murmurs by the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.

He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noonday grove :
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

SPRING.

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sat reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.
In her fair works did nature link
The human soul that through me ran,
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

THE PROGRESS OF A DARK AND TROUBLED MIND.

The intellectual power, through words and things,
Went sounding on—a dim and perilous way.

A SCENE OF MISERY.

————— When I entered, with the hope,
Of usual greeting, Margaret looked at me
A little while, then turned her head away
Speechless, and, sitting down upon a chair,
Wept bitterly. I wist not what to do,
Or how to speak to her. Poor Wretch ! At last
She rose from off her seat, and then—oh ! sir,
I cannot *tell* how she pronounced my name,—
With fervent love, and with a face of grief
Unutterably helpless. ————— Evermore

Her eyelid drooped ; her eyes were downward cast ,
 And when she at her table gave me food,
 She did not look at me. Her voice was low,
 Her body was subdued. In every act
 Pertaining to her house affairs, appeared
 The careless stillness of a thinking mind
 Self-occupied ; to which all outward things,
 Are like an idle matter. Still she sighed,
 But yet no motion of the breast was seen,
 No heaving of the heart. While by the fire
 We sate together, sighs came on my ear,
 I knew not why, and hardly whence they came.
 Her infant babe
 Had from its mother caught the trick of grief,
 And sighed among its playthings.

A COUNTRY GIRL.

No mate, no comrade, Lucy knew,
 She dwelt on a wide moor,—
*The sweetest thing that ever grew
 Beside a human door ?*

A RETIRED BEAUTY.

A violet by a mossy stone
 Half hidden from the eye,
 Fair as a star, when only one
 Is shining in the sky !

IMPRESSIONS LEFT ON THE MIND BY SONG AND MUSIC.

And when the stream
 Which overflowed the soul, was passed away,
 A consciousness remained that it had left,
*Deposited upon the silent shore
 Of memory,* images and precious thoughts
 That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed.

THE CEASELESS ROLL OF SEA-WAVES.

And see the children sporting on the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore !

DEEP THOUGHTS.

To me the meanest flower that blows can give
 Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.*

* At page 187, by a slip of memory we quoted these lines inaccurately. Perhaps they were suggested by a passage in praise of poetry in the *Shepherd's Hunting of Wither*.

Her divine skill taught me this,
 That from every thing I saw
 I could some invention draw,
 And raise pleasure to the height
 By the meanest object's sight ;
 By the murmur of a spring,
 Or the least bough's rustling,
 By a daisy, whose leaves spread
 Shut when Titan goes to bed ;
 Or a shady bush or tree ;—&c. &c.

A BLESSED MOOD OF MIND.

That blessed mood

In which the burden of the mystery,
 In which the heavy and the weary weight
 Of all this unintelligible world,
 Is lightened :—that serene and blessed mood
 In which the affections gently lead us on,
 Until the breath of this corporeal form,
 And e'en the motion of our human blood
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
 In body, and become a living soul :
 While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things.

It would be idle to praise such passages as these. No one who knows what poetry and thought are, need to be told that he who produced them is a poet and a thinker of no ordinary character.

Some time after writing the above we received intelligence of the death of this distinguished author. All the great poets who commenced their career during the latter half of the last century, have either already disappeared or will very soon disappear from the scene in the course of nature. Rogers, the oldest of them, still survives, but in a very few years more all the poets who were living in our youth and kept us in a state of agreeable expectation of new proofs of genius, will have closed their mortal life, though much of the spirit which they have left enshrined in books, will survive to charm and refine the hearts and minds of our latest descendants.

The race of writers who are succeeding our earlier favorites are not, we think, taking the same hold of the public mind and its affections. They are reviving the quaint affectations of the old metaphysical poets so well described by Johnson. They disdain to speak to the general heart with simplicity and directness. They adopt a language understood but by the learned.

Amidst much that is heavy and objectionable in Wordsworth, there is also a great deal which all men of ordinary intelligence must feel and appreciate. He was one of the most unequal writers that ever lived. One half of his collected verses are so feeble and prosaic that if they had been sent anonymously to all the Magazines in England, they would not, perhaps, have found a single admittance. Half of the other half is just above mediocrity—the rest are a *precious legacy to mankind*. Who would have supposed that the author of *Betty Foy* and *Peter Bell* could have written the *Lines on revisiting Tintern Abbey* and the *Laodimias*? Wordsworth

himself seems to have been incapable of recognizing the different degrees of merit of his several productions. He appears to have thought them all equally good. He was the vainest of England's poets. This accounts for his inequalities. No poet is inspired at all hours. But Wordsworth thought his own case an exception to this rule. Whatever fell from his lips in daily life, if he could weave it into measured syllables with like endings, was poetry to him. This was to him a happy delusion; to the world a melancholy one. Not the keenest shaft of wit or criticism could awake him from his dream.

Wordsworth died in his eighty-first year. His personal character (the frailty of self-conceit excepted) was without a blemish. All who knew him loved him. As a poet, though posterity will severely reduce his present dimensions, there can be little doubt that his name will endure as long as that of any eminent Englishman who has lived within the last two hundred years.

Mr. Moxon, the favorite publisher of the poets, has just sent forth to the world "*The Prelude or Growth of a Poet's Mind, an Autobiographical Poem by William Wordsworth.*" It is as well this was not published in the poet's life-time. He would have been ridiculed to death. Never appeared a poem by a man of real genius so open to condemnatory jests. It would have been a perfect feast for Byron in his satirical mood. If he spoke of a far better production, as

A clumsy frowsy poem called the *Excursion*,
Writ in a manner that was his aversion,

what would he have thought and said of this? A critical paper in London that usually overrates the works of Wordsworth has been obliged to admit that the language of a portion of this poem is "about as prosaic as ever took the poetical turn."

Even those who ridicule Wordsworth admit that he is a poet, and a true one too; but he is not a great one. He is too palpably deficient in energy of thought and passion, and in condensation of style to be placed in the highest rank. Wordsworth's one great fault of mind ruined him as a poet—it deprived him of that advantage which has given men of more modesty but less genius, a better chance with posterity—a severe self-criticism. Wordsworth did not hesitate to declare that "he was a specially dedicated man, appointed to shed extraordinary light upon mankind." He esteemed himself inspired, and accordingly he found it difficult to imagine that any words which fell from *his* hallowed lips could be like the words of ordinary men. There is no blank-

verse in the English language, known to the generality of readers that is so diffuse and feeble as that of Wordsworth, and what else could be expected from a writer so easily pleased with his own labors? Blank-verse, more than any other form of poetical composition, requires to be *buckramed*—to be artificially strengthened by judicious inversion and the most rigid conciseness, because it is otherwise so extremely easy that the poet is apt to be betrayed into measured prose and a weak verbosity. Good blank-verse instead of demanding less labor from the poet than rhymed verse demands a great deal more—more consummate art too, and a more learned ear. Any school-boy can write tolerably smooth verses with “a clink at the end” of the lines and may thereby, in a great measure, conceal his want of art as a versifier. But blank-verse is the bow of Ulysses. No ordinary arm can bend it. Thus we see how few of our best poets have succeeded in this measure. The heroic blank-verse of Milton and the dramatic blank-verse of Shakespeare are beyond the skill of all other poets. Akenside’s blank-verse is tolerably good, and Cowper’s is still better, but Southey’s is only rhetorical prose. It has no nerve; and no richly complicated music. Wordsworth’s is even worse. Page after page of it owes its poetical form entirely to the printer. This diffuse prose in ten syllables can never live. Weak wine will not keep. There was poetry enough and more than enough in Wordsworth’s nature to have produced vigorous poems if he had been a little modest, and could have condescended to the labor of correction and retrenchment. But as he thought all was equally good, he has let all stand. Posterity will owe him a bitter grudge. It will cast away heaps of bloated and weak and unwieldy matter without the least compunction. When this is done, indeed, what remains to him will be pure gold. There are happy passages in Wordsworth in which he leaves all his contemporaries behind him, and these can be very conveniently detached from his longer poems which have no unity and completeness in them. The *Excursion* is not properly a poem, but a succession of independent passages in blank-verse on different subjects—a number of short poems tacked together in the form of a single long one.

This *Prelude* was intended as an introduction to the *Recluse*, and the *Recluse* was a portion of the *Excursion*,* and the three together are expressions of the moods of the author’s mind at different periods of his life. But they do

* Did Wordsworth borrow the title of his longest work from that of Mallet’s blank-verse poem—*The Excursion*?

not form a poem. They are a collection of beads of all sizes on one string. There is little natural connection, and no unity.

We are reluctant that our last words should seem harsh or disrespectful. We must therefore here express our opinion, that Wordsworth, with all his faults and deficiencies, must be regarded as one of the noblest ornaments of the nineteenth century and an intellectual benefactor to his countrymen.

We read the best works of Wordsworth with a calm delight and a personal respect for the author. He is a pure and gentle teacher of the pure and gentle virtues. He soothes and refines the heart. There is something so exquisitely innocent and pastoral in all that we have heard of his daily life that he realizes our most ideal conception of the character of a serene and meditative poet. He lived in thoughtful gladness amidst groves and lakes and mountains, and seemed as intimately associated with nature as the birds that charmed him with their songs. He paid, indeed, an occasional visit to the crowded city, but hurried eagerly back again to his native haunts. There was the same avoidance of all contact with artificial life in his personal habits as in his poetry. There was an Arcadian simplicity and quietude in both.

JAMES MONTGOMERY,

Born 1771—Died—. *Reigns—George III., IV. William IV. Victoria.*

Montgomery's poetry is especially interesting to a large class of readers who delight to see the Muse enlisted in the cause of Religion. He blends piety to God with a deep and unaffected love for his fellow creatures. The spirit that pervades all his writings is truly amiable and noble, and his character as a man corresponds exactly with his character as an author. His poetry exhibits peculiar delicacy and tenderness of sentiment, and great elegance and purity of style. He never startles the reader with vigorous bursts of enthusiasm or intense flashes of imagination, but he always secures his approbation and esteem.

ROBERT SOUTHEY,

Born 1774—Died 1843. *Reigns—George III., IV. William IV. Victoria.*

Poor Southey was, for nearly three years before his death, in a state of worse than second childhood. He was the mere picture of a man, for he had survived his intellect and

his consciousness. The face of his oldest and dearest friend was as that of a stranger to him. During this long and awful period of living death, though an object of deep and painful interest to his personal friends, he was almost forgotten by the world. It was only by his perpetual appearance as an author that Southey contrived even in his best days to keep up the attention of the public to his claims to distinction, and during his own silence for the three years preceding his death and ever since that event, the silence of the public regarding him has been very remarkable, considering that he was one of the most voluminous authors of the age, and had the command of a style in prose, unequalled by that of any of his contemporaries for ease, perspicuity and elegance; while his poetry, with all its faults, has no want of metrical smoothness or richness of imagination. But the truth is, that even in his most prosperous hour, he was never a popular writer: not even when Tory doctrines were in the ascendant, and the liberal principles against which he so strenuously contended were associated in the minds of the "*respectable*" with all that is hateful and degrading. Even if he had been popular in those days, he would yet have outlived that popularity;—a quarter of a century before his death, his favorite opinions had ceased to be the fashion.

Southey was certainly a highly skilful writer; but, perhaps, his manner was generally superior to his matter. His views were narrow and intolerant. In the generous ardor of his early youth, he indulged in those noble visions and that love of liberty, which larger minds have often preserved to their latest day on earth. But when Southey changed his principles, he could make no allowance for those sentiments and opinions in others, which he had once entertained himself with the utmost sincerity and zeal. When his intellect was in its prime, he clung with the earnestness of bigotry to all those partial and contracted views which he must have seen were passing away like vapors from the general mind. It must be a melancholy thing for a truly modest and conscientious observer, to witness a vast change of opinion on all the leading subjects of human interest, and to find all his favorite associations rejected by the world, while he himself is stationary, and left nearly alone, amidst the general advance of his contemporaries. But Southey was singularly arrogant and self-conceited. If all the intellects in the world, from the commencement of time, had been arrayed against him, it would not have staggered his self-confidence for a moment. As his views were thus contracted, we ought not to be surprised that he made little impression on an age of intellectual progress. His prose, with all its grace and facility

and distinctness, is somewhat prolix and deficient in the principle of vitality. It embodies no strong or original thoughts, no eternal truths ; and has therefore nothing to preserve it from ultimate neglect and oblivion. His poems, like highly imaginative prose fictions, produce a fine and imposing general effect. But they have no passages or lines condensed into living strength. His versification, though smooth and flowing, has no vibration ; and the imagination which it displays is broad, and bright, and warm, but has no concentrated radiance. He is therefore rarely quoted. He has many descriptive passages of much truth and beauty, but they contain none of those minute and masterly touches which so delight us in Cowper and Thomson, and which leave on the mind an impression that never fades. His poetry has the vague magnificence of a dream. We allude to his longer poems. His short pieces have generally very little merit, and his want of nerve and point and concentration is of course more obvious in those forms of verse in which such qualities are most expected. In an epic poem, a deficiency of terseness and high finish is less felt than in an ode or sonnet. Southey has the diffusion of Wordsworth without his deep thoughtfulness. He is most successful in his domestic sketches. They have a certain degree of genuine truth and tenderness in them, but they do not thrill us like the fireside drawings from the hands of a Burns or a Cowper. His verse has the facility and sweetness and distinctness of his prose, but not the passion and the power and the magical hues and the felicitously chosen words which build up the poetry that is likely to live for ever. Southey, like Wordsworth, was cursed with a fatal facility, and like Wordsworth he always mistook that facility for inspiration. It was a deadly error. Thus he went on complacently from year to year, spinning line after line, work after work, until he had actually produced (including his critical labors in the *Quarterly Review*) one hundred and seventy-nine volumes, not one of which he thought would ever die !

Though few authors have had a greater number of bitter political and literary enemies, in private life he had probably not a single ill wisher. To know him was to love him.

" In no human breast
Could private feelings find a holier nest."

Much of the amiability and gentleness of his personal character is pleasingly developed in his domestic poems. As a literary critic, too, as well as a poet, he exhibits the candour and kindness of his nature, except when some political or religious bias misleads his judgment and inflames

his imagination. Thus, in spite of his disposition generally to treat his brother-bards with courtesy and fairness, nothing could be more shockingly ferocious and illiberal than his attack on Lord Byron, who had offended him both by his politics and his religion. There is sometimes a fierce intolerance in Southey's political and theological disquisitions that no one acquainted with the *man* would expect to find in the *writer*.

Yet looking only at the purely literary papers, and passing over a few, and *but* a few, passages of an opposite tendency—there is no collection of critical notices so remarkable for their amenity and candour as those of Southey in the *Quarterly Review*. In fact, this extreme amiability was objected to them as a serious defect, and Gifford, whose own performances were of such a different complexion, was often vexed that so distinguished a contributor to his pages, should exhibit so much of the milk of human kindness. Southey's honey certainly formed a strange combination with, or rather contrast to, the gall of Gifford. On one occasion the latter almost rejected a generous article of Southey's on the poet Hayley; and the Laureate declared in a letter to Sir Egerton Brydges, that if the article had been positively refused insertion, his long connection with the *Review* would have ceased from that moment. His support could not be dispensed with, and the article found admittance. It must be confessed, that though the extreme gentleness of his criticisms did honour to his heart, it somewhat lessened his authority. The kindness of his nature often led him to be more generous than just. No critic of his time ever spoke half so favourably of the small fry of minor poets of the last century. He seemed to evince a strong desire to blow their little dying embers into a flame. But this was beyond even Southey's power, though there never was a writer better qualified to throw an air of enchantment over the least indication of literary merit. Poor Kirke White, one of the feeblest, though best-intentioned of the muse's followers, owes it to Southey's friendly exertions that his lamp of fame is still glimmering through that damp thick atmosphere of oblivion in which it must be eventually extinguished. His name would have died with him if it had not been preserved by the eloquent breath of his distinguished and tender-hearted eulogist. Some poets are immortal—but there are others, *true* ones too, but not strong ones—that bear in their life's core “the lurking principle of death.” Kirke White with all his fine taste and gentle feeling, was yet one of the latter class. The *poet* will soon follow the *man*; and no voice now on earth can raise the dead.

Southey is one of the best prose writers in our language. His style is singularly clear, graceful, and unaffected. He never compels us to pause at a particular sentence or go back to any previous paragraph to gather the meaning. The uncritical reader is sometimes surprised that Southey's prose is so much admired, because he is not arrested by any prominent or isolated beauty ; but the very excellence of the style consists in the absence of all effort or display. The writer beguiles us into a consideration of the matter alone, while we forget the manner, which has nevertheless a secret charm. His narratives, especially, are admirable for their distinctness and animation. The most popular of his prose works is the *Life of Nelson*. It is a truly classical production. The style is fluent and unaffected, and is always particularly pure and transparent.

Southey's reflective and didactic prose writings are by no means so valuable as those of a narrative and biographical nature, in which his clear and graceful style is exhibited to the greatest possible advantage. His political philosophy has been thrown into contempt, by the rapid progress of liberal opinions.

CHARLES LAMB,

Born 1775—Died 1834. Reigns George III., IV. William IV. Victoria.

Charles Lamb is one of the most delightful prose writers in the language ; but as a poet he was never very popular, and would scarcely have been heard of ten years after his death had he confined himself to verse. But the quaint, quiet humour and gentle pathos of his prose essays can hardly be too highly praised.

THOMAS CAMPBELL,

Born 1777—Died 1844. Reigns—George III., IV. William IV. Victoria.

Campbell was once urged by Sir John Sinclair to write a play upon the subject of *Darius*, but he had the good sense to decline the attempt. Though the most condensed, the most nervous, and the most polished of our recent poets, his muse is deficient in dramatic power ; and, like most of our modern bards, he can better describe his own feelings than the feelings of other men. His manner is altogether too concise, too antithetical, too formal, to be adapted to every variety of passion and of humour. His style is classically, and even fastidiously correct, and it may, perhaps, be objected to it that it has too much the appearance of being constructed

on some particular model, from which he has made up his mind, that it would be an unpardonable sin to deviate even in the breadth of a hair. Thus, with all his energy and fire, his Pegasus is a checked steed, and prances in a given track. Campbell has very rarely ventured to divest himself of the silken fetters of rhyme. Blank verse, which, as Southey has well said, is the noblest measure of which our language is capable, seems to have presented him with a field too open and unbounded: He prefers the narrow and more beaten road, and it must be confessed that never did a more graceful and spirited personage condescend to travel on the common causeway. It is nevertheless to be regretted, that a writer who has given evidence of so much strength and animation, should have thus restrained his energies by over-caution. If he had only given way somewhat more freely to his own impulses, he would have been a much greater poet.

Campbell with all his fame was a timid author, and was as much frightened at his own reputation as a child at its own shadow. He was always afraid that his new productions would not come up to the expectations of the public. It is said that he was deeply hurt at the comparatively indifferent success of his *Theodric*, notwithstanding the kind and generous notice which it received from his friend Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review*. Lord Byron, in speaking of Campbell's probable vexation at Coleridge's having attacked the *Pleasures of Hope*, in a public lecture on Poetry, observed that Campbell was the most sensitive man in such matters that he had ever met with. "And yet what," added his Lordship, "has he to fear from criticism?"

His martial and naval Odes are noble productions, and the finest of their kind in the English language.

THOMAS MOORE,

Born 1780—Died ——. Reigns—George III., IV. William IV. Victorut.

It is the fashion amongst the admirers of the Lake school to speak with unqualified contempt of the poetry of Thomas Moore. This is extravagant injustice. If he has many faults, he has also many merits of no ordinary kind. We will speak of the former first, and so get rid as quickly as possible of the disagreeable part of our task. He has not much genuine pathos, and no simple nature. Just as he is making his way to the heart, some glittering ornament is sure to dissipate or distract our attention. When he aims at energy he is too often strained and bombastic; and when he attempts to represent the strongest human passions, we have a great deal

of sound and fury signifying nothing. Nature has not endowed him with any extraordinary share of high *imagination*, though there are few writers in the English language, who have exhibited such wealth of *fancy*. It is inexhaustible. The whole creation glitters in his eyes. He looks upon nothing in the heavens above or in the earth beneath, that is not instantly associated with some resplendent image. Every thing gleams and sparkles with restless brilliancy, like the breeze-stirred leaves of trees in a burst of sunshine after a summer shower. The misfortune is, that this exuberance of imagery leads him into idle ostentation, and that his muse is, accordingly, too often more fine than elegant. He never seems to understand the maxim of Thomson, that nature when unadorned is adorned the most; and he dwells so much upon the mere drapery, that he tempts the critic to accuse him of a deficiency of skill in the higher departments of his art:

“ Poets, like painters, thus, unskilled to trace
The naked nature and the living grace,
With gold and jewels cover every part,
And hide with ornament their want of art.”

In fact it cannot be denied, that radiant imagery too often forms the ground-work of his productions, instead of the embellishment. His characters are lay figures, on which he hangs the most gorgeous and glittering garments. They are not of flesh and blood. They are like theatrical angels that owe every thing to paint and dress and silver wings. Even his notions of female beauty are somewhat imperfect. He is too fond of analyzing or enumerating the various points of excellence, and leaves no unity or distinctness of impression upon the reader's mind. But, as he might have learned from Pope,

“ 'Tis not a lip or eye we beauty call,
But the joint force and full result of all.”

He produces a rich assemblage of charms; but he gives the same to all his heroines, and they have all the requisite supply of starry eyes, cherry lips, and rosy cheeks. The poetry of the author of *Lalla Rookh* is more thoroughly Oriental than he, perhaps, imagines. An overwhelming display of fanciful imagery is precisely the besetting sin of all Eastern poets, whose jewellery completely throws into “*a privacy of light*” the subject it is intended to illustrate and embellish. This richness of fancy is in them—and we fear in Moore also—generally unaccompanied with depth of thought. The great poets rarely dazzle and fatigue the reader with scenes that glitter like streams in the noon-day sun. The pages of Milton and Shakspeare do not perpetually flash

and sparkle, but yet are always rendered animated and distinct by the broad light of imagination.

But now let us turn to the best side of the picture. Where is the writer who has moved in the golden fetters of verse with more ease and grace than Thomas Moore? And that this is not a trivial accomplishment, or one of easy attainment, may be shewn by a reference to the vast number of failures amongst those who have aimed at the same excellence. His rhymes almost always seem the consequence of the idea to be expressed, and not the cause. The words flow as easily and unaffectedly in his most intricate measures, as they do in elegant and familiar conversation. The reader is delighted to find a great difficulty so admirably overcome, and this success is so rare, that the pleasure is heightened by surprise. We really can remember no poet who, in rhymed verse, has exhibited such an easy mastery over the mechanism of his art. Moore's poetry reads as if it were the writer's natural mode of expressing his thoughts and feelings. Not that it is always natural in the *matter*, but that the *manner* is exactly suited to the character of the poet's mind. It seems not the result of labour or affectation. In all those measures which are characterized by that obvious melody, the charm of which is appreciated by the general ear, he is uniformly successful. To a wonderfully rich fancy and a fine ear for the harmonies of verse, he adds the great advantages of extreme ingenuity of thought, a quick sense of the beautiful, a turn for elegant compliments, in which he rivals even Pope himself, and a readiness of playful satire, in which he has never been surpassed. Perhaps the prime quality of his mind is wit. It seems ever at his call, and has always a double effect from its ease and spontaneity. For piquancy and point, nothing in the language can be compared with his political squibs. Let them appear how or where they may, the author's hand is instantaneously recognized. They exhibit a delightful combination of wit and fancy, and these qualities are rendered peculiarly effective by the graceful volubility of the verse. He moves with more readiness and grace in rhyme than others do in prose. His satire never wants point, and always enchants the reader with its inimitable ease. He surpasses Prior in his arch allusions and in the smoothness and facility of his style. He cannot so well handle the heavy flail of Churchill, but he has fifty times his cunning in the use of a genteeler weapon. Satirists, however, have generally to work with temporary materials. Their genius is thrown away upon perishable themes. Moore is chiefly a party satirist, and nothing is more fugitive than the fashionable topics connected with politics. A new king or even a new

administration may throw the cleverest political satires into utter and irrecoverable oblivion.

It is melancholy to reflect upon the uncertainty of poetical fame, and to look back at the long file of highly gifted men who after being for many years the "observed of all observers," are now gradually passing away from us for ever into the dreary region of oblivion. Even they who have never felt the sunshine of fame, shrink with horror from the thought of being utterly forgotten.

"For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey
This pleasing, anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?"

Fortunately for the happiness of popular poets, they are generally buoyed up during their natural lives with the hope of future fame, and reconcile themselves to the fate which is common to all mortals with the proud anticipation of a second and more enduring existence, even upon the earth. There have been, however, favourite writers who have survived their fame. Hayley was an instance. We do not mean to compare Thomas Moore with such a writer as Hayley, who was literally no poet. This cannot be said of the author of *Lalla Rookh*, who is as decidedly a true poet as any writer of his time, though the rank and character of his genius, and his chance of immortality may be open to doubt and disputation. His best hope of future fame seems to rest on his *Irish Melodies*.

That Thomas Moore has not the deep philosophical sentiment of Wordsworth, nor the burning energy of Byron, nor the classical purity and precision of Campbell, nor the rich stateliness of Southey, nor the simple nature of Crabbe, nor the wild and rich imagination of Shelley or of Coleridge, must be at once admitted; but neither has any one of these great writers individually, all the attributes of his contemporaries. Nature is too sparing of her nobler gifts to lavish them on a single person. Thomas Moore, we repeat, has one of the endowments of a genuine poet—a *prolific fancy*, and in this respect he has no superior. He has also a larger share of pure wit of a light and playful kind, than has fallen to the lot of any other living author.

EBENEZER ELLIOTT,

Born 1781—Died 1850. *Reigns—George III., IV. William IV. Victoria.*

Elliott is called the Corn-law Rhymers, because he has written so many lyrics on the subject of the corn-laws. His politics are fiercely democratical.

It were to be wished that he could satisfy himself that independence and patriotism are qualities not necessarily connected with an intense hatred of the upper classes of society. He is evidently laboring under a deplorable political hallucination. He seems to think that every man in any way connected with the Government is a kind of fiend incarnate, and that higher ranks generally are united in a deadly conspiracy to enslave or starve their poorer countrymen. His ferocious tone and wild exaggerations may do much injury amongst the class of people to whom he addresses himself, and cannot possibly do any good. All men cannot be equally rich or equally powerful, and as long as society exists there will be some degree of dissatisfaction and discontent amongst the unlucky majority. Who does not regret this inequality of fortune? Who would not wish all men to be equally wise, wealthy, and happy? But what rational man expects that such an Utopian state of things can ever be brought about in human society? All that we can hope for is, that the necessary evils of society may be lessened or rendered bearable. Such furious tirades as those of Elliott are more likely to array the different ranks in an ungenerous and unreflecting hostility towards each other, than to bring about that happy understanding which may lead to a mutual endeavour at improvement, and cause liberal concessions on the one side, and a manly patience and forbearance on the other. Elliott's muse should turn to more poetical subjects than the Corn-laws, on which she is certainly a little crazed. How he ever came to turn the stream of Helicon that way is not easily explained, because he has considerable imaginative power, and one would think might find other subjects of an infinitely more congenial nature on which to exercise his poetical genius. Why not treat such matters in plain prose? Elliott is an honest and truly well-intentioned person—and, moreover a man of genius, but he decidedly wants taste and discretion.

There is sometimes a certain coarseness and literalness in Elliott's productions that are not consistent with the character of pure poetry, though they are often associated with animated versification and strong good sense. A critic has observed of Elliott's poetry that it is not album poetry, nor annual poetry, nor chamber poetry, and that he would not wish him to throw off his homely garb and array himself in the costume of a *petit maitre*. But surely a poet may write very differently from Elliott, and yet not write in the style of a *petit maitre*, or in the tone of the drawing-room. We are told that his poetry is suited to the manufacturing classes, and is very popular with them. It may be so—but

the *subject* must be the spell with which he touches them. As to the *poetry* of his songs, it is not, generally speaking, such as is calculated to make its way to the heart or to kindle the imagination. After one of his lyrics let any one read a song of Burns, and the difference between them will make him understand the nature of our objection to the songs of Elliott.*

LEIGH HUNT,

Born 1784. Reigns—George III., IV. William IV. Victoria.

Few poets have more faults than Leigh Hunt. But if they were fifty times as many—if they were “thick as the autumnal leaves that strow the brooks in Vallombrosa,” they would not conceal or over-power his peculiar beauties. His best friends must observe with regret his studied negligence of metre, his affected novelties of diction, and the occasional vulgarity of his style. But who would not forgive the rose its thorns, and pass over numerous defects, for the sake of still more numerous excellencies? His sunny brightness of fancy, his depth and delicacy of observation, his freshness and tenderness of feeling, his intense love of nature, his happy power of description, his exuberant flow of animal spirits, the cheerful tone of his philosophy, his genuine worship of truth and freedom, and his frank, cordial, and familiar manner, are qualities which even those who may be most alive to his faults are often amongst the foremost to acknowledge and appreciate. These remarks apply with equal justice to his essays and his poems. As an essayist, he is in the same class as Lamb and Hazlitt, and takes his station perhaps between the two, mingling in his own works a large portion of the beauties of both. As a poet, some critics have connected him with the Lake School; but though in his abhorrence of the more precise and formal style that was fashionable in what has been erroneously called the Augustan Era of English Poetry, he resembles the poets of the Lakes, he differs from them in many points of a very characteristic nature. Wordsworth would not acknowledge him as a disciple. He belongs to no school. Perhaps of all living poets the one to whom he may be most easily compared and to whom he has already been compared by Hazlitt, is Thomas Moore, though, as he is far less smooth, terse, and polished than the bard of Erin, the resemblance between them does not immediately strike the casual reader. Though he is not so well fitted to delight the drawing-room with brilliant com-

* This notice was written in the Poet's life-time.

mon-places, his wealth of imagery, his sparkling and elaborate descriptions, his frequent richness and felicity of phrase, and, above all, a certain gay and social spirit, frequently remind us of some of the happiest traits of the author of *Lalla Rookh*. If he were more uniformly careful and fastidious in his diction, and aimed more at point and antithesis of style, the resemblance would be nearer. But trimness, smartness, and regularity are Leigh Hunt's aversion. He affects "harmonious discords," and is ambitious to snatch a grace beyond the reach of art.

Leigh Hunt has too many idiosyncracies and a little too much subtlety and refinement for the mob of readers. It is said, that a man who is but just in advance of his pupils, is the most effective teacher. It is the same with the author. He should not be too far beyond the crowd, if he desires to sway their sympathies and opinions. There are writers of these times, who have exhibited perhaps greater force of style and vigour of thought, but it would be difficult to name any one who has surpassed Leigh Hunt in a delicate sense of the beautiful and the true, and a power of expressing those subtle and remote images which are the despair of ordinary writers, and of giving to familiar things an aspect of novelty and freshness.

Nothing but Leigh Hunt's disinterested and indestructible love of truth, and a naturally lively imagination, could have preserved him from despondency or despair in the midst of his great and manifold afflictions; and it is truly delightful to observe, how he continues to the last to turn to the sunny side of all things. He is just as full of hope and trustfulness as ever, and he looks round upon nature and upon man with the same cordial sympathy and admiration that warmed his heart in youth. This is true religion—true virtue—true wisdom.

In early life, Leigh Hunt was followed everywhere by the blood-hounds of party until he had neither privacy nor peace even under his own roof. He was bitterly hated and maligned and persecuted in every way for those opinions which are now professed by princes and prime ministers. He has lived down a thousand lies. He who was once ridiculed and abused as a *Radical Reformer* and looked upon as a wretch without a single principle of morality or religion, is now pensioned by a generous and enlightened Government for past services in the cause of liberty, and is respected by all parties for his genius and his virtue. If any of the cowardly gang of calumniators, the secret assassins of reputation, are now alive who once assailed him so bitterly and perseveringly, we should like to know what they say or think of that vast revolution of public opinion which has raised such men as Leigh Hunt so immeasurably above them, and nullified all their malignant wit and Billingsgate abuse.

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM,

Born 1784—Died 1842. Reigns—George III, IV. William IV. Victoria.

Allan Cunningham never wrote any thing in verse in which he did not display more or less of his poetical genius, but his fame must rest upon his songs alone, which are instinct with truth and nature.

MRS. SOUTHEY,

Born 1786. Reigns—George III, IV. William IV. Victoria.

One reason why Mrs. Southey is less known to the public than L. E. L., or Mrs. Hemans, is the modesty with which she has omitted her name from the title pages of her several works. Many of the lovers of poetry have several of her smaller poems by heart, though some of them may know not to whom they are indebted for the beautiful thoughts and melodious sounds that haunt their hearts and ears.

Her prose is occasionally a little inflated and ostentatious, a fault of which she is never guilty when she pours out her soul in verse. Her smaller poems are perhaps more truly characteristic of the best qualities of her genius than her more ambitious efforts. No parent can read her exquisite address *To a Dying Infant* without emotion; and indeed no man or woman with a human heart can fail to recognize its truth and tenderness.

JOHN WILSON,

Born 1788. Reigns—George III, IV. William IV. Victoria.

Wilson's *City of the Plague* has passages of exquisite pathos, and in his prose fictions he frequently unlocks "the sacred source of sympathetic tears." The happiest specimens of his prose are wonderfully eloquent and powerful. His great merit as a poet consists in his fervid admiration of intellectual beauty—in the delicacy and spirituality of his fancy—his religious love of nature, and his delicate perception of her least obvious charms—his deep domestic tenderness, and his pure and elevated faith in the natural excellence of the heart of man. Though his metre is occasionally somewhat deficient in strength and firmness, it is always very sweet and flowing.

HENRY HART MILMAN,

Born 1791. Reigns—George III, IV. William IV. Victoria.

The poetry of Milman is somewhat too cold and stately, but his muse assumes a high tone of morality and well sustains it. His pages are sprinkled pretty thickly with beautiful

and brilliant imagery, but he does not often touch the heart. His diction is elegant and his versification musical.

THOMAS HOOD,

Born 1798—Died 1845. Reigns—George III., IV. William IV. Victoria.

Hood seemed satisfied to be regarded as the Prince of Punsters, though there are passages in his graver writings that show a far nobler order of genius than is required in the concoction of verbal quibbles. He had not only a very large share of original wit and humour, but a tenderness and delicacy of sentiment, and a fine feeling for the beautiful and the true, which his friends regret that he suppressed for the reputation of a mere joker.

BRYAN WALLER PROCTOR.

Proctor's poetry has much pathos and gentle passion and delicacy and sweetness.

THOMAS NOON TALFOURD.

Talfourd is not only an elegant poet, but an eloquent prose writer and a tasteful and subtle critic. Of his tragedy of *Ion* any living poet might be proud; it is a truly classical production.

SPRING.

THE fresh and joyous Spring at length is seen,
And all things breathe of bliss. The youthful year
Hath burst the barriers time and tempest rear;
And clothed in vernal beauty, smiles serene
The quick-reviving earth. Though long hath been
The trance of Nature on the naked bier
Where ruthless Winter mocked her slumbers drear,
And rent with icy hand her robes of green,
At last 'tis brightly broken! Glossy trees,
Resplendent meads and variegated flowers,
Gleam in the sun, and tremble in the breeze!
And now with dreaming eye the poet sees
Fair shapes of pleasure haunt romantic bowers,
And laughing streamlets chase the flying hours!

STANZAS.

THE radiant dawn, the year's fresh spring,
 New leaves and opening flowers,
 Are lovelier than the loveliest thing
 That breathes of later hours.

How beautiful the first sweet light
 To human features given,
 For infant innocence is bright
 With glory brought from Heaven !

The golden locks, the smooth fair face,
 The round limbs sleek and small,
 With witchery of unconscious grace
 The gazer's heart enthral.

A lovely and a loving child
 That smiles in sinless glee,
 Hath oft the sternest breast beguiled
 To sweet idolatry.

When like a cherub from above,
 Thus smiled my own glad boy,
 My fond heart overflowed with love,
 And almost ached with joy.

And Oh ! his sister angels fair
 With all their winning ways
 Would make me quite forget that care
 Could darken mortal days.

Those forms have passed beyond the seas,
 And now no more I hear
 Light laughs, like happy harmonies,
 From some diviner sphere.

In silent rooms my slow tread wakes
 Fit sounds for sorrow's mood ;
 Through my soul's cloud no sunbeam breaks :
 And home's a solitude !

Calcutta, 1840.

GEORGE SAND.

A VERY few years ago, the writings of Madame Dudevant (George Sand) were spoken of in England with disgust and horror. Not that the good people of England—that is to say not one in a million of them—had read the works; they condemned them on mere hearsay as most books are judged of by the multitude. But good translations have now made the English familiar with her writings, and as a few leading critics in spite of the prejudice against her have acknowledged the power of her intellect and the energy and eloquence of her style, the tide is beginning to turn in her favor, and nearly all confess that she is a woman of genius, though many qualify their admiration of her powers with a condemnation of the purposes to which she turns them. Her intentions are, no doubt, noble, but her favorite theories respecting marriage are such as, if acted upon generally, would overturn society and plunge us into savage life. Over-refinement in speculations of this kind always carries us back to rude nature and a state of moral chaos. To all general rules for the happiness of the greatest number there must ever be many exceptions, for frail man can never mould perfect institutions. But it is the mistake of enthusiastic reformers to condemn existing institutions on account of those defects which could not be avoided by any system that would not introduce other evils greatly more numerous and more intolerable. The wonder is to see people of such breadth of view as Madame Dudevant fall into mistakes that seem to imply the most pitiful short-sightedness. But there is a tendency in genius of the imaginative order to concentrate for the occasion all its powers of observation on one single object of good or evil. For the time it sees nothing else. Thus Rousseau and Shelley and George Sand take a partial or one-sided view of the institutions of society and fall into errors which the multitude of less gifted minds instinctively avoid. In those great questions of morals which interest all mankind, common feeling, common sense, and general experience are less likely to mislead us than the most ingenious theories of individual genius.

Though Madame Dudevant intends no evil, but on the contrary aims, however Quixotically, at rendering the relations of society more perfect, the question of the propriety of dissolving at pleasure the marriage contract is too delicate a one to be laid before the ordinary race of young novel readers, especially when those who turn free thinking

into free acting, are represented as model people. Pope's Gloisa was scarcely too free in her sentiments for the modern Socialists.

Let wealth, let honor, wait the wedded dame,
 August her deed and sacred be her fame !
 Before true passion all those views remove,
 Fame, wealth, and honor what are you to love ?

This sort of clap-trap is too often effective with the young ; but the united sense of different nations, the gathered wisdom of ages has pronounced that principles of this nature if carried into action, would utterly destroy the happiness of mankind. It is the same in politics as in morals : the principle of liberty carried to an excess is self-destroyed, and is succeeded by licentiousness and anarchy.

Putting aside all reference to some of her erroneous theories, Madame Dudevant is a very admirable writer and the most intellectual French woman of her age. She has, however, besides her errors as a writer, some eccentricities of conduct as a woman, and in England we suspect her male attire and cheroot would excite a good deal of horror in quiet circles. She has left her husband and mixes more freely in male society than that of her own sex. Her husband is a dull plain matter-of-fact country gentleman, and as he is quite incapable of appreciating such a woman's better qualities or of making any sort of allowance for her eccentricities, it was not very likely, considering Madame Dudevant's free opinions, that two such opposite natures could remain very long together. However, they continued to live under the same roof for eight years, which was more than was expected by those who knew anything of the parties.

The London periodicals notice with high praise Madame Dudevant's last publication entitled "*Françoise le Champi*." It is a three act comedy said to be full of a sweet home feeling ; more quiet and domestic in its character than any of her novels. Oddly enough this domestic drama, full of chaste morality and simple nature, has delighted the volatile and impassioned French nation. It has been acted upon the stage more than a hundred times and still brings crowded and eager audiences. The play is said to have no conventional stage points, to give no opportunities for starts and screams and "damnable faces," and yet it pleases the Parisians, though from what we hear of it, we fear it would be thought tame even by a London audience. We should as soon have expected that a novel like the *Vicar of Wakefield* would be a household book in Paris, as that a quiet domestic drama should delight our mercurial neighbours.

The following sonnets addressed to George Sand are by Mrs. Browning :—

TO GEORGE SAND.

A DESIRE.

Thou large brained woman and large hearted man,
Self-called George Sand ! whose soul, amid the lions
Of thy tumultuous senses, moans defiance,
And answers roar for roar, as spirits can .
I would some wild miraculous thunder ran
Above the applauded circus, in appliance
Of thine own nobler nature's strength and science,
Drawing two pinions, white as wings of swan,
From thy strong shoulders, to amaze the place
With holier light ! That thou to woman's claim,
And man's, might join beside the angel's grace
Of a pure genius sanctified from blame,
Till child and maiden pressed to thine embrace,
To kiss upon thy lips a stainless fame.

A RECOGNITION.

'True genius, but true woman ! dost deny
Thy woman's nature with a manly scorn,
And break away the gauds and armlets worn
By weaker women in captivity ?
Ah vain denial ! that revolted cry
Is sobbed in by a woman's voice forlorn :—
Thy woman's hair, my sister, all unshorn
Floats back dishevelled strength in agony.
Disproving thy man's name. And while before
The world thou burnest in poetic fire,
We see thy woman-heart beat evermore
Through the large flame. Beat purer, heart, and higher,
Till God unsex thee on the spirit shore ;
To which alone unsexing, purely aspire.

These are fine Sonnets, though they have more masculine strength in them than feminine sweetness. The two qualities are only to be combined, it seems, in the very highest order of genius. Joanna Baillie affords another example of a female author writing strongly, but with a want of delicacy and softness. These qualities were eminently conspicuous in Felicia Hemans, but then she wanted vigour.

DEATH AND THE WARRIOR.

[The following poem was written as an illustration of an engraving by R. Dagley, Esq., in the second edition of a work entitled "*Death's Doings*." Death is represented as in the act of placing a helmet on the head of a young warrior, who is standing at the door of a tent, while a female is winding a scarf round his arm. A horse caparisoned, military emblems, &c., are seen in the back-ground.]

I.

THE warrior's soul is kindling now
 With wildly blending fires ;
 He fondly breathes each raptured vow
 That faithful love inspires ;
 But not those soothing words alone
 Arrest the maiden's ear,
 For young ambition's loftier tone
 Awakes the throb of fear !

II.

They hear the war-notes on the gale,
 Before the tent they stand ;
 His form is clad in glittering mail,
 The sword is in his hand ;
 Her scarf around his arm is twined,
 Love's silken chain and spell,—
 Ah ! would that mortal skill could bind
 The links of life as well !

III.

The battle-steed is waiting nigh,
 Nor brooks his lord's delay,
 And eager troops are trampling by,
 And wave their banners gay ;
 Nor boding dream, nor bitter care,
 In that proud host is found,
 While echoing through the startled air
 The cheering trumpets sound !

IV.

The maid with mingled pride and grief,
 Faint hopes and trembling fears,
 Still gazes on the gallant chief
 Through dim impassioned tears ;
 He sees but victory's laurel wreath,
 And love's unfading flame,
 Nor thinks how soon the form of Death
 May cross the path of fame !

V.

" *A last farewell—a last embrace—
And now for Glory's plain !*"
Those parting accents left a trace
Of frenzy on her brain ;
And when the warrior's helm was brought
To crown his forehead fair,
Alas ! the shuddering maiden thought
'Twas DEATH that placed it there !

WOMAN.

I.

IN CHILDHOOD, like a lambkin wild with joy,
As innocent and free and far more fair—
In GIRLHOOD, fawn-like, with a timid air,
And purity that shrinks from all alloy,
Even as the delicate plant whose small leaves coy
Close at a touch ;—and all beyond compare
With other excellence, however rare,
In her full WOMANHOOD ! Not as the toy
Of the male trifler, but the faithful wife,
The careful mother, the kind nurse or friend,
The civilizer sweet of social life,
Whose eye can check the bold, the bad can mend,
With beautiful rebuke ; who stills all strife,
And cheers our day, and fits us for its end.

II.

Talk not to me of man's free-heartedness—
'Tis selfish all—a mask—another name
For thirst of power or avarice of fame.
Seek truth and love—the will to soothe and bless—
In WOMAN's finer nature ! In distress
Of soul or circumstance, when others blame,
Avoid or scorn us, *she* is still the same,
Or clings more closely in her fond caress.
Angel of Earth ! Dear Minisress divine !
Whose faith is the religion of the heart,
Whose rites are deeds of love ! All words of mine
But mock thy worth. When other lights depart,
Thy sweet fixed star in cloudiest hours can give
A charm to life, and make us dare to live !

ON THE ITALIAN OPERA.

"As for operas, they are essentially too absurd and extravagant to mention. Whenever I go to an opera, I leave my sense and reason at the door with my half-guinea, and deliver myself up to my eyes and ears."—*Chesterfield*.

WHEN the Italian Opera was first introduced into England, about the latter end of the seventeenth century, its dramatic absurdities were perpetually ridiculed by men of taste. Addison devoted several numbers of the *Spectator* to the subject, and remarked, that the success of the opera had caused it to be laid down as a general rule, "that nothing that is not nonsense is capable of being well set to music." Lord Chesterfield subsequently observed that Metastasio attempted a very dangerous innovation. "He tried," said the noble critic, "gently to throw some sense into his operas; but it did not take." If Italian operas are more popular at this day in London than the plays of Shakespeare, it is not on account of their dramatic merits, but their exquisite music, the accompanying glittering dresses and gorgeous decorations, and the wanton *ballet* with which the entertainments are concluded. These attractions, combined with the charm which John Bull invariably discovers in every thing foreign and expensive in the arts, has secured them a degree of success which works of far higher pretension, and addressed more to the mind than to the senses, have often failed to obtain.

One of the admirers of the Italian Opera, in the course of his defence of this species of amusement, makes the following observation:—

"People, it is said, do not murder each other in duett, nor do they swoon in *cadenza*; it is therefore absurd to make so preposterous an application of an art which professes to imitate nature! In this objection the distinction between physical and artificial imitation is lost sight of. The same objection might, with equal justice, be offered to the poetry of Homer, the landscapes of Claude, or the Venus de Medicis, none of which are to be found in nature."

The objection, as far as the Opera alone is concerned, is well founded. When a man, supposed to be worked up, like Shakespeare's Moor, for example, into a terrible tempest of jealousy and rage, turns towards the audience, and modulates the whirlwind of his passion into a series of melodious quavers, he presents such an abrupt contrast between the sublime and the ridiculous, that a severer shock to reason and common sense can hardly be conceived. The dramatic illusion is at once destroyed. It is impossible for the imagination to support it. The ear may continue to be gratified, but not the mind. In

Shakespeare's dramas, on the other hand, an actor may represent nature to the life. If he be told of some hideous calamity, he is either struck mute with horror, or he gives vent to his agony in some brief and passionate exclamation. But in the Italian Opera he would be as musical as a dying swan. Regarding the Opera only as a species of drama, its absurdities are so monstrous that it seems idle to explain them. What should we think of poor old Lear lifting his gray discrowned head against the pitiless storm, less unkind than his daughters, and singing an elaborate composition of Rossini's, accompanied by a crowded orchestra? We are to recollect also how rarely the sense, when there happens to be any, is scrupulously attended to by the musical composer. The pleasantry of Addison on this subject may be applied to most of the operas of the present day. "I have known," says he, "the word '*and*' pursued through the whole gamut, have been entertained with many a melodious '*the*,' and have heard the most beautiful graces, quavers, and divisions bestowed upon '*then*,' '*for*,' and '*from*,' to the eternal honour of our English particles."

The remark that the objection to the Opera, of a want of nature, may be offered with equal justice to "the poetry of Homer, the landscapes of Claude, or the Venus de Medicis," is not correct. These are specimens of perfect art; and the perfection of art is nature. The supposition that objects of high art are not in nature is a great mistake. It is absurd to suppose that the characters of a drama or an heroic poem are out of nature, merely because we have no historical evidence of their existence, or because we may happen to have met with no persons in real life who are in all respects their exact counterparts. The great artist, whether in poetry, or painting, or sculpture, copies *general* and not *individual* nature. The portrait of *Othello* is not that of an individual; it is the representation of human nature under the influence of a powerful passion. We do not ask whether Claude's pictures literally represent some particular landscapes, but whether they illustrate or correspond with that general idea which external nature leaves upon the mind. So it is with the Medicean Venus. It would be ridiculous to conclude that it is impossible such a work could be true to nature, because it was not copied from an individual model. As the whole civilized world is enchanted with that matchless statue, it may be taken as a proof that its consistency with our notions of perfect female beauty is the cause of such universal admiration; and that these notions are in some way or other derived from nature, will hardly be disputed.

We arrive at truth through the medium of the imagination.

If a painter were to represent things as they *really are*, he would represent them *falsely*. This is no paradox ; though it may sound like one. He would throw aside, for instance the illusions of perspective and bring out distant objects as largely and distinctly as the nearest. All objects are represented by the imitative arts, not by rule and measurement—not as they really are—not even as they *appear* to the ignorant and the dull, but as they are seen by the intellectual and the imaginative, who have finer perceptions and are more observant.

Mr. Galt, in the preface to his story of "The Stolen Child," anticipates the objections of the critics to certain *improbabilities*, and exults in the reply that the story is founded on *fact*. If I understand him rightly, he also takes credit to himself for having studied *individual* and *local*, instead of *general* nature. But great artists are not such servile copyists. A study of individual models is the A. B. C. of their profession. It prepares them for the study of general nature and for original combinations. A painter is no more required to stop at these models than to confine himself to separate limbs or features. The word *invention*, as applied to the imitative arts, means nothing that is in opposition to truth. Mr. Galt, painfully conscious of the *improbabilities* of his own story, takes occasion to tell us "that when we hear a critic loquacious about the improbabilities of a tale, we may rely upon it that the said critic is a green-horn!" He who is on his oath as a witness, is at liberty to startle us with strange and particular truths opposed to our general opinions and experience, but the painter and the poet are bound to preserve an air of probability, or a certain degree of consistency even in their most imaginative productions. A surveyor who has to report upon the height, length and breadth of hills and vallies, may surprise us with his literal truths ; but the painter is to represent things not as they are, but as they appear. His aim is *verisimilitude* only. He is to preserve a *truth of illusion*. He is not to shock or perplex us with the odd freaks and accidents of nature. If he should take a fancy to a cloud precisely in the shape of an officer with a cocked hat and sword, bowing to an old woman with kettle in her hand, and insert it in his landscape, we should laugh at his justification on the ground of truth, though he were to bring a hundred witnesses to prove that he had only represented an actual occurrence. Such a copy from *nature* would be *unnatural*. The painter in words is bound by the same rules as the painter in colours.

Poets and painters, with that jealousy of science which is peculiar to imaginative minds, have bitterly complained

that the triumphs of art are now in imminent danger of being neglected and undervalued. Science is intruding on the domain of art. The painter gives way to the mechanician. Genius is rendered useless. We allude to the invention of Daguerreotype.* Any smart fellow with the aid of the necessary machinery may produce effects with the sun's golden finger surpassing in fidelity the inspired pencil of a Rubens or a Raffaele.

But after all, science, be its progress what it may, and the greater the better, can never contract the sphere of the imagination. It may lessen for a while the profits of the artist, but genius must be genius still and as rare as ever. The work of true genius will always command the applause and reverence even of that multitude who may prefer in point of economy or exactness the cheaper and easier results of science. The Dutch school of minute and servile fidelity, will suffer more by the mechanical contrivances which furnish fac-similes of nature than those higher and nobler departments of art in which the soul of the painter is breathed upon the canvass. The hand of high genius will always work a peculiar charm that no machinery can rival. Miracles are nobler than discoveries. They are better proofs of spiritual power. In a few years all science becomes common—genius never! No one is astonished that school-boys inherit the science of Newton. Science forces itself on multitudes who can soon look back and laugh at the ignorance of men once idolized for their wondrous extent of knowledge. But the poet of a thousand years still maintains his station. No school-boy of even the nineteenth century can laugh at the pretensions of a Homer.

A writer in one of the public journals appears to think that Pasta's influence on the passions of an audience, which equals, in his estimation, the simpler way of Siddons, is a proof that the Italian Opera is quite as natural as the regular drama. I shall not stop to inquire whether his opinion, that the effect produced by the former in the operas of Metastasio has equalled the force of the latter in her representation of the characters of Shakespeare, be really well-founded, (though I may observe, in passing, that I greatly doubt it,) but even

* Though Daguerreotype drawing is not an art, it demands considerable skill and caution in the handling. Light is a subtle thing to deal with. The rapidity and exactness of this mode of producing portraits are its chief attractions. The sitter is not fatigued. The work is done as by a stroke of magic. Then again the artist here is no flatterer, nor is he a caricaturist. He nothing extenuates nor sets down aught in malice. He smoothes not a wrinkle on the brow of a queen. He exaggerates not a single charm. He takes us exactly as we are. If the portrait is an ugly one, it is the fault of our features, and not a deficiency of skill in the artist—the servant of the sun.

allowing, for the sake of the argument, that such may be the case, I still think, that it by no means settles the point at issue. I am far from maintaining that the Italian Opera, with all its various adjuncts, cannot be turned into a means of stirring deep emotions, when supported by the magnificent acting and enchanting voice of the great Queen of the Lyric Drama. Though the truth of action on the stage is outraged by a lyrical accompaniment, the alliance is not injurious to the music ; and the sway of music over the passions is universally admitted. We are therefore to consider whether the power and popularity of the Opera should be attributed to its musical or to its dramatic merits ; for it is by no means to be taken for granted that its results are invariably derived from the combination of both. The power of music is often independent of its accidental accompaniments. Every one must have met with many instances in which, though feeble and inflated expressions have been set to natural and pathetic music, the latter has still had its legitimate effect in spite of the connection. So the truth and nature of the *music* of an Opera may, in particular passages, triumph over the incongruity of its accompaniments ; but I think it hardly possible that this enchantment or illusion should be sustained unbroken through a variety of scenes or for any length of time. Then again it is fair to calculate how far the genius of such an actress as Pasta might sometimes overcome even greater disadvantages than those which I have attributed to the Opera. Her own abundance of nature might, in some instances, supply the want of it in the Opera, and cover, like Charity, a multitude of sins. Such a Napoleon-like spirit might pass over Alpine obstructions in the realms of art as if they were level ground. She is a mighty conqueror—a glorious magician ! Her sceptre is a wand that calls up nature and awakens the noblest associations, even amidst the scenes and influences of frivolity and fashion. It is more reasonable to attribute the movements of passion in the audience to the genius of Pasta, and the beauty of the music, than to the dramatic action or poetry of the Opera. The music alone so elevates the fancy and so prepares the heart for tender or sublime impressions, that an actor who has any touch of nature in his own soul, may occasionally blind the audience to, the greatest incongruities, and with the irresistible aid of true music may for a time defy the disadvantages of the most unnatural accompaniments. When the soul is raised and the heart moved by exquisite sounds and the magical effect of pageantry and splendour, combined with that mysterious feeling which the association of thousands of human beings in the same

enjoyment invariably excites, it is wonderful how electrical is the slightest stroke of nature, and how even the faintest resemblance of truth may be mistaken for the reality. Thus, therefore, the success of the Opera, assisted as it has been by such unrivalled harmony—by dramatic action sometimes so natural and true as to hoodwink a large portion of an audience to the absurdity of its connection with the music—by the lascivious ballet—by many other sensual excitements and associations—and lastly, by the sovereign sway of fashion which has enlisted the vanity of the multitude in its favor.—affords no proof whatever of the justice of its pretensions to the favorable judgment of the critic when the propriety of its heterogeneous combinations becomes the subject of dispute. Thousands attend the Opera who take no real interest either in the music or the acting, but who would dread the charge of vulgarity or a want of taste, should they acknowledge their secret sentiments. It is the most aristocratic of all public amusements. It has always been conspicuously supported by our own nobility, and in other countries it has been rendered of the first importance to courtiers and men of rank and fashion by the direct patronage of government and the superintendence of kings and princes. In England the high price of tickets excludes the vulgar, so that the possession of a box at the Opera is regarded as an evidence both of wealth and of refinement. Thus it is very easy to account for the popularity of the Opera without any admission of its truth and nature. Ninety in every hundred of those who attend the Italian Opera, in England, neither understand the language of the dialogue nor the beauty of the music. Even those who can read and speak Italian, cannot follow it on the stage when conjoined with music, and the music itself is often so elaborate, that none but tutored ears can fully appreciate its merits. Still, however, as there is always a kind of enchantment in music, even when it is but vaguely understood, and as it produces that state or mood of mind which is most susceptible of emotion, these influences, combined with the adventitious aids already adverted to, have sometimes produced those effects upon an audience which have been mistaken for a proof of the truth and nature of the Opera and its equality with the legitimate Drama.

Voltaire and others have attempted to trace a resemblance between the Italian Opera and the lyric drama of the Greeks, but even if this resemblance were more obvious than it really is, the opposers of the Opera could still maintain their ground, for the ancients might err in a point of taste as well as the moderns.

Augustus Schlegel, however, has maintained that it be-

trays the most complete ignorance of the spirit of classical antiquity to compare the opera with the ancient drama.

It is conjectured that the opera had its rise among the Provincials in those times of ignorance and barbarism, on which we look back with no other view than to estimate the progress of improvement.

The *Quarterly Review*, under the reign of Gifford, in an able article on dramatic Literature, observes :—

“ Though the Italians may be said to have completely failed in dramatic composition, they may claim the honor of having invented *that incongruous compound of music, decoration and dance, the Modern Opera*—a species of entertainment truly characteristic of the frivolity of the age which is capable of preferring a spectacle, where sense and propriety are sacrificed to sound, to such productions as *Macbeth* and *Othello*, when elucidated by the genius of a *Kenble* or a *Sidons*.”

Schlegel describes the Opera as an instance of “ *the anarchy of the arts.*” Its “ *fairy world,*” he says, “ *is not peopled by real men, but by a singular kind of singing creatures !*” He seems to be of Addison’s opinion, that the sense of the Opera, when there is any, is of no importance, as it must be lost in the music. The language being foreign is no disadvantage, and the words “ *which contain the greatest number of open vowels, and distinct accents for recitative, are the best.*”

Hazlitt is equally caustic in his remarks upon this species of entertainment :—

“ The Opera, from its constant and powerful appeals to the senses, by imagery, by sound, and motion, is well calculated to amuse or stimulate the intellectual languor of those classes of society, on whose support it immediately depends. This is its highest aim, and its appropriate use. But, without the aid of luxurious pomp, what can there be to interest in this merely artificial vehicle of show, and dance, and song, which is purposely constructed so as to lull every effort of the understanding and feeling of the heart in the soft, soothing effeminacy of sensual enjoyment ? The Opera Muse is not a beautiful virgin who can hope to charm by simplicity and sensibility ; but a tawdry courtesan, who, when her paint and patches, her rings and jewels are stripped off, can excite only disgust and ridicule.”

Leigh Hunt has justly ridiculed in his “ *Companion*” the introduction on the stage of a singing Earl of Derby, singing foot-guards and a warbling sheriff. To go back again a little with my authorities, which I shall not pretend to quote in their regular order, Lord Kames, in his *Elements of Criticism*, in his chapter on “ *congruity and propriety,*” observes, that “ *the most gorgeous apparel, however improper in tragedy, is not unsuitable to Opera actors ; the truth is, an Opera is a mighty fine thing ; but as it deviates from nature in its capital circumstances, we look not for nature and propriety in those which are accessory.*” Lord Lyttleton, in his *Persian letters*, has a pleasant fling at the Opera, where in the character of a Persian he inquires, who is singing on the stage ?

The reply is, Julius Cæsar. What, says he in return, was Cæsar famous for singing? Pope personified and attacked the Opera in verse.

“ When lo ! a harlot form soft sliding by
 With mincing step, small voice, and languid eye ;
 Foreign her air, her robe's discordant pride
 In patchwork fluttering, and her head aside ;
 By singing peers upheld on either hand,
 She tripped and laughed, too pretty much to stand ;
 Cast on the prostrate Nine a scornful look
 And thus in quaint recitativo spoke :
 ‘ O Cara ! Cara ! silence all that train ;
 Joy to great Chaos ! let division reign !
 * * * * *

But soon, ah ! soon, rebellion will commence,
If music meanly borrows aid from sense.”

I should be ashamed to depreciate the real power and delightfulness of music ; but when its votaries attempt, as they have done, to make “ odious comparisons,” I feel disposed to exercise an honest discrimination, and to confess that as an imitative art, it cannot possibly compete with poetry or painting. Sound can only imitate sound, but words can represent the most subtle and complicated thoughts, and colours can preserve with perfect fidelity and clearness all the peculiarities of a landscape, or the features, the expression, the air and the attitude of a face and form. These magical and mighty triumphs are achieved by intrinsic power, unassisted and alone. But without the aid of poetry how small is the power of music as an imitative art ? Unaccompanied by this interpreter, it is almost unintelligible. It is true that like one who speaks to us in an unknown tongue, it may contrive to make us sensible as to whether it is sad or merry, tranquil or excited, and awaken a sympathetic feeling or sensation ; but it can convey no determinate ideas to the mind like those presented to us by the painter or the poet. Music is, upon the whole, far less intellectual than the other fine arts. It is indeed exquisitely delightful ; but so also is “ a steam of rich distilled perfumes.” The chief intellectual charm or power of music is the effect of association, and this, by no means an intrinsic or peculiar merit, it possesses in common with all natural objects and with every thing that addresses itself to the senses. A particular tree or flower, or a familiar flavor or scent, may call up as many and as sweet associations. The music that draws tears from the sternest eye when linked with some tender circumstance or emotion, peculiar to the hearer, may be listened to by another individual of even greater sensibility with either the most perfect indifference or only a vague sensual pleasure. The airs that stir a whole

nation with patriotic emotions, may be meaningless and ineffective in a different land. This is not the case with painting; it speaks a universal language: and it is almost the same with poetry. The check upon the universality of the latter from the necessity of translation is a mere accidental circumstance. It is not from a similar cause that the power of music is so limited. Musical tones are like the painter's colors, and are the same in London as in Paris. They are not affected by the Babylonian curse.

Some musical composers have endeavoured to convey definite ideas to their audience: but except in the mere imitation of natural sounds, they have, I believe, always failed. If a thousand persons were desired to interpret the precise meaning of a new musical composition that trusted for its effect entirely to its intrinsic power of expression, and was unaccompanied by words and unconnected with particular associations, the listeners would not be more numerous than the opinions. They might all agree that the music was melancholy or cheerful, simple or scientific, but this would be the extent of their unanimity. They might easily concur as to its general character, but not as to its particular meaning.

I fear that these remarks will not only be unpopular but offensive. Many of the votaries of music are so bigotted in their faith and so ardent in their temperament, that they have no toleration for those daring freethinkers who either doubt or deny the supposed attributes of their idol.

Let me, however, give music its just praise. *It cannot convey defined ideas*; but still it obtains, by whatever means, a powerful influence on the passions. It kindles the imagination, and softens and subdues the heart. Of all sensual gratifications, it is the most nearly allied to those influences which operate immediately on the intellect, and by this congeniality or proximity it exercises through the thin partition of the senses, an indirect and highly beneficial power upon the intellect itself.

To return to the critic alluded to in the early part of this article. He says that "the object of art is to produce an effect not in nature, but beyond it and superior." If nothing can be said to be in nature that is not the servile copy of individual models and actual details, the critic is right; and the subjects of high art, are superior to nature. But this is not the case. The perfection of art is nature, and nothing more. The most exquisite and refined conceptions of female loveliness that ever glowed in the mind of a Raffaele are as true to nature as the vulgar and literal representations of a Teniers. The characteristic difference in the productions

of these two artists consists not in the degree of nature which they embody; but in the kind or order of it. Raffaello selects, generalizes, and combines his materials with consummate taste and a noble feeling for the beautiful and sublime. Teniers is content to copy nature in her humblest forms, and depends more upon his fleshly vision than his inward eye. But that high truth which men of genius arrive at through the imagination, is as much a portion of nature as the meanest detail that is obvious to the ordinary spectator. A great artist views not objects with a microscopic eye, nor subjects them to rule and measurement, nor confines his studies to individual forms or accidental circumstances; but generalizes his notions of beauty, and gathers a store of glorious images from the wide range of nature. Thus it may often happen that a common observer, who is ignorant of the less obvious charms of nature, may fancy her surpassed on the artist's canvas, because, less favored than her worshipper and representative, he has not seen her in her secret places nor imbibed the breath and spirit of her beauty. They who have studied nature with a poet's or a painter's reverence, have never been guilty of the almost blasphemous supposition that she is to be excelled by the work of mortal hands. The most imaginative conceptions of beauty are nothing but the reflection thrown upon the mind by the actual loveliness of nature. Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, that we can no more form an idea of beauty superior to nature than we can form an idea of a sixth sense, or any other excellence out of the limits of the human mind. Burke has also maintained that the power of imagination is incapable of producing anything absolutely new, and that it can only vary those ideas which it has received from the senses. To praise the Fornarina of Raffaello or the landscapes of Claude on account of their out-doing nature, is a mockery of art. In both instances a competent judge recognises that perfect truth and consistency which never could exist in any work of art that was "not to be found in nature." That which is out of nature must be unnatural. There may be mysteries in a religious creed above human reason, but there is no excellence in art which is above nature.

"Nature is made better by no mean
But nature makes that mean; so o'er that art
Which you say adds to nature, is an art
Which nature makes."

Winter's Tale.

He who says he has met with no living form so lovely as the Fornarina or the Venus de Medicis, adduces no proof that such loveliness is inconsistent with actual nature. Many

a lover has recognized a far finer form in the first sweet conqueror of his heart. Much depends upon the tone and character of the observer's mind. A poet or a painter sees a great deal more in a figure or a landscape than a pedant or a mathematician. Love and enthusiasm and sensibility have a wonderful effect upon the eye, and enable it to discover a thousand graces that escape a cold and phlegmatic observer.

Love gives a previous seeing to the eye.

Lord Byron was so struck with the superiority of living nature to the noblest works of art, that in his *Don Juan* he calls the whole class of sculptors "a race of mere impostors."

"I've seen much finer women ripe and real
Than all the nonsense of their stone ideal.

I'll tell you why I say so, for 'tis just
One should not rail without a decent cause :
There was an Irish lady, to whose bust
I ne'er saw justice done, and yet she was
A frequent model ; and if e'er she must
Yield to stern Time and Nature's wrinkling laws,
They will destroy a face which mortal thought
Ne'er compassed, nor less mortal chisel wrought."

The blank verse of the regular drama has been thought by some critics to be as open to objection as the singing at the Opera. But even supposing for a moment that they are both inconsistent with truth and nature, the latter is, at all events, far more so than the former. Then why defend the greater sin by the lesser? Dr. Johnson used to repeat with approbation the remark of some unknown critic, that blank verse is verse only to the eye, and that there are very few reciters of blank verse who enable the hearer to say where the lines end or begin. I do not admit that the blank verse of Shakespeare interferes in the slightest degree with that illusion or *vraisemblance* on the regular stage which is so constantly interrupted or destroyed by the singing at the Opera. In the first place, dramatic verse is not like heroic verse. It is freer and more flexible in its construction, and approaches almost as nearly to colloquial language as does well-written prose. The mind of the hearer is never shocked by its improbability, as it is by the singing of warriors and sages on all possible occasions, whether trivial or important. Who can forbear to smile when he hears some bloody veteran detailing his plans or breathing out his last breath upon the field of battle in a flourish of quavers?

In real life, men unconsciously measure out and harmonize their language, and in this way adapt it to their several circumstances. Their sentences, with a very slight

alteration, would often make tolerable blank-verse. When a man addresses a large assembly of his fellow-creatures upon some solemn and important occasion, his words are better chosen and his sentences more euphonious than when he is giving some ordinary domestic directions to his servants, or talking over the frivolous intelligence of the day; and this is not always an indication of a desire of display, but in fact more frequently arises from the deep interest which the speaker takes in his cause or subject. It is the same in the private circle. Our tones are graver and our words more measured when we wish to be impressive or are labouring with weighty thoughts. When a person of sensibility is detailing his sorrows and misfortunes, how soft and slow is his utterance, how smooth and rhythmical are his cadences! His voice is subdued into a gentle though querulous murmur like that of the "complaining brooks." How musical are a lover's words! Shakespeare attends to these matters with "a learned spirit." In his comic scenes he often allows the verse to run into ordinary and irregular prose. His clowns speak like clowns; but when a king speaks, it is with that majestic measurement of his words which we look for in the representative of dignity and power. Thus there is nothing out of nature or that serves to destroy the dramatic illusion in the blank verse of Shakespeare, but there is no authority or precedent in real life for the conjunction of music and action in the Lyric drama.

SONNET.

LADY—when life is desolate and drear,
 How sweet to weep, if charms like thine beguile
 Wild passion's strife and wake the soothing tear!
 Benign consoler! at thy pensive smile
 Calm piety and trusting faith prevail
 O'er sorrow's madness; hope's rekindled beam
 The dull gloom cheers, and peace, so wont to fail,
 Steals o'er the troubled spirit like a dream!
 A cloud is on my heart,—yet, fondly now
 I gaze on thee, nor breathe one murmuring sigh;—
 There is a grace upon thy placid brow,
 A soul of beauty in thine azure eye,
 Blent with a holy meekness in thine air,
 That speak not of the earth, and shame the fiend, Despair!

ON STRONG WRITING.

ABOUT a quarter of a century ago, personal hostility and the language of Billingsgate were introduced into literature. But writers capable of something better soon grew ashamed of this mode of warfare, when they saw themselves surpassed by brainless blackguards. Even these detestable mouth-pieces of malice and falsehood, have at last been silenced, by the improved feeling of the public. We now rarely find an editor of a review or a newspaper assailing private character; though still here and there a fellow whose head is turned by a too lively consciousness of the power to wound or irritate which the press sometimes places in even the feeblest and filthiest hands, is seen to play fantastic tricks before the public, and strut and fret his hour upon the stage of literary life with the airs of an upstart and a bully. When he does not actually trench on private life he contrives to gratify his vanity and spleen with expressions of insolent superiority or contempt towards those who have made themselves public property by their public writings. All who come in collision with him are represented as the scum of human nature. One is an idiot, another is a driveller, a third is a sumph. The scribbler easily persuades himself that this is "*strong writing*," and we lament to say that there are but too many silly readers who encourage such miserable wretches by their applause, mistaking impertinent sneers and cant phrases and contemptuous epithets for wit and vigor.

Now, if any man unaccustomed to the handling of a pen should find when he first begins to write for the public press that the task seems beyond his powers, and that he is disheartened by a sense of his own deficiency, let him *run a muck*, and tilt at all his contemporaries, and he will soon discover that nothing is so easy as this sort of *strong writing*. Many a vulgar-minded and illiterate personage, who could not put half a dozen decent sentences together in the discussion of any great general principle, has actually won for himself a bastard reputation as a "*strong writer*" by the lavish use of insulting epithets; by sheer spleen, arrogance, and scurrility. The "*strong writer*" is nothing if not abusive. To parody Macaulay's character of the Hindoos—what the horns are to the buffalo, what the paw is to the tiger, what the sting is to the bee, what beauty, according to the old Greek song, is to woman, *abuse* is to the "*strong writer*." What a melancholy though ludicrous

spectacle such a creature must ever present to a sensible observer—to every reader of good taste and gentlemanly feeling. While his peacock vanity is spreading its flaring tail—while he is openly exulting in his imagined might and splendour—he is in reality the object of hatred and contempt to all whose opinions are of the slightest value.

An attack from a “strong writer” is a sort of indirect acknowledgment of a man’s merits; for in ninety cases out of a hundred, the “strong writer” preserves his ammunition for persons of some distinction. This implied compliment, in the form of abuse is, indeed, not worth much. It is far from being altogether desirable. But of two evils we naturally prefer the least; and abuse from such a quarter is far less offensive than commendation.

We would earnestly warn all young writers against mistaking insolent sneers and offensive epithets and an assumption of superiority for indications of literary genius. There is such a “*fatal facility*” in the use of these wretched clap-nets, that they are apt to exult in a delusive consciousness of gigantic strength in proportion to the readiness with which their memory assists them with the vocabulary of abuse. They may mistake the consciousness of this “fatal facility” for a sort of inspiration; and some of their ignorant admirers are sure to confirm them in their deplorable delusion by congratulating them on the prodigious force with which they have “pitched it into” their antagonists. He who has once satisfied himself, that by the lavish distribution of vulgar epithets he has proved his intellectual power, is not likely at any future time to write like a man of taste, or even like a gentleman. The low habit will become a second nature.

A supercilious contempt for our fellow creatures and a disposition to deny or to underrate or to sneer away the merits even of rivals and opponents, and to refuse all toleration of differences of taste and sentiment, are indications, not only of a narrow mind, but of a cold and ungenerous heart. In proportion to the nobility of his own nature is the man of true genius disposed to regard with a favorable eye the intellectual claims of others. It is delightful to witness the generous enthusiasm with which the majority of the most gifted men of the present age acknowledge both publicly and in private life, the justice of each other’s claims to the applause and admiration of mankind. A man of first-rate ability himself is far more likely to exaggerate than to under-value the ability of a competitor; while, on the other hand, your small conceited scribbler, your arrogant upstart, especially, if of a spiteful and irritable nature, not only speaks with unmitigated scorn of men on a level with himself; but

endeavours, very earnestly, however vainly to elevate his own position by lowering that of his superiors. He cannot be calm and courteous for two days together. He rejects all civility from others as an unwelcome restraint upon his own flippancy and malice.

It is the small philosopher who has always a sneer upon the lip, a scowl upon the brow; it is the small philosopher who is most inveterately severe upon his fellow-men, and whose knowledge and experience are most liable to turn into contempt and bitterness. And it is the small scribbler whose ink is venom. It is weak wine that turns sour. "The passion of contempt," says Coleridge, "is the concentrated vinegar of egotism." Genius reverences genius. The good and great discover some trait or touch of their own nature in almost every thing. They can "distil out" "some soul of good" even "in things evil!" A large and loving heart, while it eagerly embraces all forms and degrees of intellect and virtue, makes the most generous allowances for those frailties and imperfections of which a petty, peevish, petulant, cynical, self-sufficient and cavilling spirit may present unconsciously a melancholy example in himself, but which can never overlook or forgive in others.

Know that pride
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty
Is bitterness; that he who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he hath never used; that thought with him
Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself doth look on one
The least of Nature's works, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn, which wisdom holds
Unlawful ever. O be wiser thou
Instructed that *true knowledge leads to love.*

These "strong writers" occasionally resort to ridicule, and make the most ungainly attempts at wit and drolery. But they are incapable of a frank and hearty merriment; for in that there is always some admixture of kindliness. They "grin horribly a ghastly smile." That which they would pass off for humour is malignant buffoonery. True humour is almost always associated with fine taste and a generous nature. If any one would wish to see how genuine humour may be connected with a refined pathos, and all the graceful amenities of a warm and indulgent heart, let him turn to the novels of Dickens or to the works of Lamb, (the gentle *Elia*,) or to the polished Essays of Addison.

HOME-YEARNINGS.

WRITTEN IN INDIA, IN SICKNESS AND AFFLICTION.

I.

IN every change of fortune or of clime,
 In every stage of man's uncertain lot,
 The more endeared by distance and by time,
 Affection's sacred home is unforget.
There lives the spell that wakes the sweetest tear
 In feeling's eye, and cheers the troubled brow ;
There dwells each joy the tender heart holds dear ;
There ties are formed that few can disavow ;
 And cold is he to nature's finer sway,
 Who doomed to wander, weeps not on his way !

II.

From that dear circle peace will never fly,
 While love and tender sympathy remain
 To foil the glance of care's malignant eye
 And make more gentle the rough hand of pain.
 The restless throng that haunt ambition's shrine
 And madly scorn the sweet domestic sphere,
 Condemned ere long in shame and grief to pine
 And curse their wild and profitless career,
 From Envy's scowl and Flattery's hollow strain
 Turn in despair and seek repose in vain.

III.

Queen of the Nations ! Island of the brave !
 Home of my youth ! Bright Eden of my heart
 Though far beyond the broad Atlantic wave
 My boundless love shall but with life depart.
 Yet farewell all that brightens and endears !
 Forms of domestic joy, a long adieu !
 These withered plains but wake my ceaseless tears ;
 These foreign crowds my fond regrets renew ;
 For lone and sad, from friends and kindred torn,
 My path is dreary, and my breast forlorn !

IV.

Star of the wanderer's soul ! Unrivalled Land !
 Hallowed by many a dream of days gone by !
 Though distant far, thy charms my thought command,
 And gleam on fancy's sad reverted eye.
 And though no more my weary feet may stray
 O'er thy green hills, or down each flowery vale,
 Where rippling streams beneath the bright sun play,
 And throw their gladdening music on the gale

There are fond hopes that will not all depart,
 'Till Death's cold fingers tear them from the heart !

V.

Vain, faithless visions ! 'Mid each earthly ill,
 The soul can darken, or the bosom wring,
 Why haunt ye thus the lonely mourner still,
 And fitful radiance o'er life's ruins fling ?
 Meteors that cross my solitary way,
 Oh ! cease to mock the tempest of despair !
 Scourge of the clime ! pale Sickness holds her sway,
 And bids my lacerated heart prepare
 To meet in foreign lands the wanderer's doom—
 An early fate, and unlamented tomb !

1822.

MORNING.

I.

BEHOLD glad Nature's triumph ! Lo, the sun
 Hath burst the pall of night, and o'er the earth
 Reviving radiance scattered ! Sleep hath done
 Her death-resembling reign, and thoughts have birth
 That thrill the grateful heart with holy mirth :
 While fresh as flowers that deck the dewy ground
 Gay Fancy's bright-hued images abound,
 And mortals feel the glory and the worth
 Of that dear boon—*existence* ;—all around
 Unnumbered charms arise in every sight and sound !

II.

The scene is steeped in beauty—and my soul,
 No longer lingering in the gloom of care,
 Doth greet Creation's smile. The gray clouds roll
 E'en from the mountain peaks and melt in air !
 The landscape looks an Eden ! Who could wear
 The frown of sorrow now ? This glorious hour
 Reveals the ruling God ! The heavens are bare !
 Each sunny stream, and blossom-mantled bower
 Breathes of pervading love, and proves the Power
 That spoke him into life, hath bless'd Man's earthly dower

SIR JOHN FAUSTAFF, DON QUIXOTE, SIR ROGER
DE COVERLEY AND MY UNCLE TOBY.

HE who has once become acquainted with these unrivalled intellectual creations (as substantial as flesh and blood,) has increased the number of his associates with four delightful beings who will never leave him while he breathes the breath of life. They are not like the slight and vulgar sketches of ordinary nature or of mere manners, that we generally meet with in the page of fiction, and which

Come like shadows, so depart.

The majority of modern novelists perplex us with shadowy shapes that leave no trace behind them, but these four characters are as distinct to our apprehension as living creatures, and have an individuality founded upon general nature that renders them equally intelligible and pleasing to all times and nations.

It is interesting to remember that Shakespeare and Cervantes were contemporaries, and that they finished their mortal career upon the same day. Lope de Vega, who has been called the Spanish Shakespeare, flourished about the same period : but though a successful dramatist, he was not so nearly allied in genius to our own great poet as Cervantes was. It is true, that Lope de Vega was a better playwright than the author of Don Quixote, but he stands greatly lower as a man of genius. As a dramatist, Cervantes was singularly unsuccessful, and was a striking illustration of the strange truth that a man may display a rich dramatic invention in a romance or novel, and fail entirely in writing for the theatre. In later times and in our own country, Fielding and Sir Walter Scott have both shown, that the order of mind which supplies a prose fiction with dramatic scenes and characters is not identical with that which produces and adapts a picture of human life for representation on the stage. The novelist excels chiefly in description and narration, the dramatist in dialogue : and though we often see fine dramatic *materials* in a well-conceived novel, there is rarely at the same time that skill or instinct or intuition which is displayed by a genuine dramatist in making the several creatures of his brain develop their own peculiar characters. In the same way we are sometimes puzzled at observing all the elements of rich and beautiful poetry in a prose romance by a writer, whose brain seems as barren as winter, the moment he attempts a regular poem. It would lead us too far from our present purpose if we were

to make any attempt to account for these well known facts in the world of intellect.

We have reason to know that Cervantes could not have written plays like Shakespeare: but it is quite certain that he has produced a comic character that is as perfect in its way as old Jack Falstaff himself. It has probably, indeed, given pleasure to a much greater number of readers, for the far-famed romance of Cervantes has been translated into every European language. The author was neglected, but his book was extremely popular from the moment of its publication, which was eight or nine years after the appearance of the first and second parts of Shakespeare's King Henry the Fourth. Though Cervantes was suffered to languish in poverty and neglect, it is said that Philip III. was delighted with his romance, and was fully aware of its popularity.* It is added that one day standing in a balcony of his palace, his Majesty perceived a student on the bank of a river, reading a book, and every now and then striking his forehead and bursting into fits of laughter. That man, said his Majesty, is either mad or reading Don Quixote. Some courtiers went out to satisfy their curiosity, and found that his Majesty had made a happy guess, the student being actually engaged in reading the adventures of the valorous Knight of La Mancha. Our own Charles the Second had *Hudibras*† by heart, and yet allowed the unhappy author to starve in the streets of his metropolis.

It is quite possible that Shakespeare himself had held his sides over the ludicrous misfortunes of the Knight of the Rueful Countenance, for English literature in the time of Elizabeth was rich in translations from the continental languages, and it is very unlikely that so famous a work as Don Quixote should have been neglected by the linguists who supplied the English literary market with foreign rarities. At all events we may be certain that no one would

* It is melancholy indeed to remember that men whom the world adore have died in beggary. Cervantes who has given so much delight to mankind, was so reduced as to be compelled to beg for his support, and to receive assistance by the hands of the servants of his patrons. Camoens, the great Portuguese poet, supported his last moments by alms which his black servant gathered in the streets of Lisbon. After the death of Cervantes, five cities of Spain disputed for the honor of having given him birth. He reminds us of the fate of Homer.

"Seven wealthy towns contend for Homer dead,
Through which the living Homer begged his bread."

† *Hudibras* is a vast storehouse of wit, but after all it is too local and temporary to give lasting or general pleasure. If regarded as an imitation of Don Quixote, it is undoubtedly a failure and full of incongruities. But all imitations of the romance of Cervantes are very unsuccessful. Smollett's Sir Launcelot Greaves is his poorest production.

have relished its humour with a greater *gusto* had he enjoyed that opportunity, than he who introduced into the world the delightful Jack Falstaff.

There are as many striking points of opposition between Sir John Falstaff and Don Quixote, as if they had proceeded from the same brain, and were expressly intended to illustrate each other upon the principle of contrast. Sir John is all plumpness and merriment.

“The fattest hog in Epicurus’ sty.”

The hero of La Mancha is a mere anatomy, and has a presence as sad and solemn as a mute’s. The one is uniformly cheerful, the other uniformly solemn. The one is absorbed in sensual delights, and abhors the remotest idea of pain or danger; the other voluntarily endures the pangs of hunger, exults in the severity of his trials, and only seems to exist when life itself is threatened. The humour of the one character consists in the transformation of the sublime into the ridiculous, that of the other in the exaggeration of trifles and common-places into a romantic importance and magnificence. Falstaff turns the weightiest business of human life into a jest, and Don Quixote converts the dirty sluts at the doors of miserable inns into radiant princesses at the gates of stately castles, and turns a barber’s brass basin into Membrino’s helmet.

Sir John Falstaff is a gentleman by birth and education, but his principles are destroyed by a preponderance of the animal propensities. Don Quixote is also a gentleman, but under the most humiliating circumstances he preserves the best attributes of that character entirely unimpaired. Falstaff is a coward and a liar, but the Knight of La Mancha is brave and honorable.* The latter is too proud to be mean, while the former is too vain to be great. Sir Philip Sidney, the observed of all observers, is not a truer hero or gentleman than Don Quixote. His solitary imperfection is an obliquity of mind on a single subject. He is

* In Morgan’s ingenious but paradoxical Essay on the character of Falstaff, he tries hard to persuade the world that Jack Falstaff is no coward. Perhaps he is not a coward from mere constitutional timidity, but it is clear that he is a coward on reflection;—that is to say, that he prefers a safe life and a cup of sack to the chances of death and glory. He never seems to want presence of mind. He has always so much coolness in the midst of danger as to give utterance to the most ingenious witticism; and nothing requires more presence of mind than wit. But he is too much of an Epicurean to risk substantial pudding for empty praise. Though not indifferent to glory, he loves life better. It is a bad compliment to Shakespeare to maintain, that Falstaff is in no sense of the word a coward; for if Mr. Morgan be correct, the dramatist has failed to give the impression he intended.

on all other points as sane and judicious as could be desired. Even this one imperfection is occasioned by an excess of generous impulses—the credulity and extravagance of a noble nature. But Falstaff deviates as much from true wisdom, and discovers a far more deplorable alienation of mind, when he imagines that there is no pleasure but what is derived from sensual excitements, and that man approaches the extreme point of felicity in proportion as he sinks his nature to that of a beast. It is better to mistake an inn for a castle, than to suppose the sole enjoyment of a rational being to consist in sack and debauchery. Falstaff's life is that of mere flesh and blood. It is shared by the lower creation. His intellectual powers evaporate in a witticism, but his sensual propensities are pampered and gratified to their utmost capability of enjoyment. Falstaff has no love for woman beyond the sensual. Don Quixote's is pure and ideal. Even their corporeal frames, as already noticed, are in keeping with this contrast of character. Falstaff is a huge hill of flesh—a horse-back breaker. Don Quixote is mere bag of bones and armour, that when struck in conflict seem to rattle in unison. Even the miserable Rozinante finds his master a man of no substance. Falstaff would crush the poor animal to the earth. The Knight, however severely pommelled, is in no danger of a fever. You might as well anticipate an apoplexy in a skeleton. Starvation is scarcely a hardship to him. He has no flesh and blood requiring nutriment.

Don Quixote and Sir John Falstaff equally excite our mirth, but the one is not only the cause of wit in others, but is witty himself and relishes a joke. Whereas the other never smiles. Nothing but his wit and good humour save the English Knight from absolute contempt, and nothing saves the Spaniard but his virtue and valour. We as often laugh *with* Falstaff as *at* him, but Quixote never shares the joke. He gives it up to us entirely. The humour of the Spanish romance, with a characteristic national bias, depends chiefly on the solemn gravity of the Knight and the simplicity and phlegm of the Squire. The more grave and austere is Quixote, the more the reader gives way to his inextinguishable laughter.* It adds a peculiar zest to the humour of the scene in which poor Sancho is tossed in the blanket, when the author tells us, that as the round-bodied squire rose

* Some of the incidents in the romance are so filthy, that they would turn our stomach if they did not shake our sides. If Don Quixote and Sancho had themselves laughed when they vomited upon each other, the reader's feeling would have been that of pure disgust. But their extreme gravity and distress provoke our mirth.

and fell in the air, *he is clearly of opinion* that even the Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance himself, but for his extreme indignation, *would have laughed outright.*

But though there is more wit than humour in Falstaff, and no wit and infinite humour in the character of the lean Knight of La Mancha, we must not speak too profanely of the attributes of Shakespeare. Gifford, in his edition of Massinger, has dared to assert that it is in wit, and in no other quality, that Shakespeare is unsurpassed by other writers. This is poor praise indeed for the greatest of all dramatists, ancient or modern. A mere writer or utterer of witticisms does not stand particularly high in the scale of intellectual excellence.

Wit is infinitely below humour, because it may be possessed by a coarse and limited capacity, and by one who, with a certain kind of ready talent, has no pretension to genius. But true humour is generally associated with a fine intellect, great delicacy of observation, and a feeling for the pathetic and sublime both in art and nature. Wit includes puns and conundrums and may take its independent place in Joe Miller Collections or newspaper "Varieties;" but humour has reference to individuals, and is employed in the illustration of points of character. There is as much humour in the delineation of Falstaff as in that of Don Quixote, with the addition of a lavish display of wit.

Cervantes, in the character and achievements of Don Quixote, has contrived with matchless art to give an air of reality to the most hyperbolic descriptions and the most extravagant adventures; and while he ridicules the fantastic follies that have been committed under the banners of chivalry, he never lets us cease for a moment to love and esteem all that is amiable and noble in connection with it. Shakespeare with kindred skill has compelled us to love what is really loveable in the fat Knight of the Castle, notwithstanding his gluttony, and cowardice, and falsehood.

We must proceed to give a few illustrations of the character of Falstaff. Nothing can be richer in comic flavour than the scene in which he acts the part of the King, and praises himself at the expense of the prince.

"Falstaff.—There is a virtuous man, whom I have noted in thy company, but I know not his name.

"P. Henry.—What manner of man, an it like your Majesty?

"Falstaff.—A good portly man, i'faith, and a corpulent; of a cheerful look, a pleasing eye and a most noble carriage; and, as I think, his age some fifty, or by'r-lady, inclining to three score; and now I remember me, his name is Falstaff if that man should be lewdly given, he deceiveth me; for Harry, I see virtue in his looks."

There is no point of Falstaff's character more delightful

than his surprising readiness and self-possession, which make us forgive or extenuate the lies and rogueries which call upon him so frequently for the utmost exertions of his wit and ingenuity. In the scene in which "eleven men of buckram grow out of two," when he is called upon to explain how he could distinguish the men in Kendal-green when it was so dark, according to his own account, that he could not see his hand, the reader or auditor is surprised and delighted with the happy evasion.

"*Poins*.—Come, your reason, Jack, your reason.

"*Falstaff*.—What, upon *compulsion*? No; were I at the strappado, or all the racks in the world, I would not tell you on compulsion. Give you a reason on compulsion! if reasons were as plenty as blackberries, I would give no man a reason on compulsion."

When the Prince, after all the Knight's boasting, convicts him of cowardice, and reminds him how he ran and roared for mercy, and inquires—"What trick, what device, what starting hole, canst thou now find out to hide thee from this open and apparent shame?" he throws his querist quite out again with a most felicitous excuse.

"*Falstaff*.—I knew ye as well as he that made ye. Why, hear ye, my masters: was it for me to kill the heir apparent?"

A similar instance of his instinctive skill in getting out of a scrape, of his "fine deliveries," is in the scene in which the hostess in her anger betrays him to the Prince, who, according to Falstaff's assertion, owed him a thousand pounds.

"*P. Henry*.—Thou sayst true, hostess; and he slanders thee most grossly.

"*Hostess*.—So he doth you, my Lord; and said this other day, you ought him a thousand pound.

"*P. Henry*.—Sirrah, do I owe you a thousand pound?

"*Falstaff*.—A thousand pound, Hal? a million: thy love is worth a million; thou owest me thy love.

"*Hostess*.—Nay, my Lord, he called you Jack, and said he would cudgel you.

"*Falstaff*.—Did I, Bardolph?

"*Bard*.—Indeed, Sir John, you said so.

"*Falstaff*.—Yea; if he said, my ring was copper.

"*P. Henry*.—I say, 'tis copper: darest thou be as good as thy word now?

"*Falstaff*.—Why, Hal, thou knowest, as thou art man, I dare; but as thou art Prince, I fear thee, as I fear the roaring of the lion's whelp."

When the prince convicts him of speaking ill of him, he excuses himself by saying that he dishonored him before the wicked that the wicked might not fall in love with him.

Another remarkable and most amusing point in Falstaff's character, is the manner in which, with a consciousness of its absurdity, he accuses others of those particular sins and imperfections which are his own most prominent characteristics.

Thus after his affair at Gadshill, he accuses the Prince and

others of cowardice—"A plague of all cowards, I say, and a vengeance too! marry and amen!" So when he joins in the attack upon the travellers, he calls them *gorbellied knaves, fat chuffs, bacons*; and with a reference to his own *youth*, he exclaims, "What knaves? young men must live!" In reply to the reproofs of the Chief Justice, he has the laughable impudence to say, "You that are old, consider not the capacity of *us that are young*." When asked, if his broken voice amongst other infirmities was not a sufficient indication of old age, he pleasantly surprises us with asserting that he lost it with "singing of anthems."

In the same spirit he utters self-complaints and accuses himself of a melancholy disposition. "A plague," he exclaims, "of sighing and grief! it blows a man up like a bladder!" as if he forgot or wished others to forget, that his size was to be attributed to a very different cause.

Dr. Johnson accuses Falstaff of a malignant disposition, but this appears to be one of the few vices which cannot fairly be laid to his charge. He speaks satirically of others, in a style in which idle and witty braggarts generally indulge themselves; but his perpetual merriment and good humour is inconsistent with so sullen and gloomy a feeling as malignity, which is too nearly allied to spleen and hypochondriasis, for so jovial and sociable a personage as old Jack Falstaff. If he were malignant, he would not be so great a favorite. A malignant man is not fond of joking upon his own foibles and personal appearance, and inviting others to share in the laugh. In truth, he is too fat and indolent to care much for any one. He divides his fellow-creatures into two classes, those who can contribute to his pleasure as boon-companions, and those who not being fond of a good sherris sack are unworthy of a thought. He is really harmless: and is guilty of no very atrocious or revolting crimes, at least none incited by ill-will or hatred towards his fellow-creatures. Amidst all his hostile jokes on the prince, it is clear that he loved him. He swears that the prince must have given him some medicine or love-potion to call up his affections.

Falstaff's exuberance of animal enjoyment and huge rotundity of form are brought into striking contrast with *Justice Shallow*, who is "like a man made after supper with a cheese-paring; and who when he was naked, was for all the world like a forked radish with a head fantastically carved upon it with a knife." The Knight has a still more exquisite foil in *Silence*, who "had been merry twice and once ere now."

There is, as we have already observed, as fine a contrast between Sir John Falstaff and Don Quixote, as if they had been drawn by one master-hand. There is also a congeniality

of conception in the characters of Falstaff and Sancho Panza, who like Falstaff is of the earth earthy, and who has considerable natural sagacity and vulgar knowledge, though less wit and understanding than the Englishman. They both take a literal view of life and its enjoyments, both are harmless liars, and are both in too good condition to be heroes. Cervantes describing an inn-keeper, takes occasion to intimate that excessive obesity or, as Shakespeare would say, "three fingers on the ribs," is not favorable to courage: the Spanish Boniface alluded to, is said to be "*a man extremely corpulent, and therefore inclined to be peaceable.*"

Sancho and his master are in every respect distinguished from each other, both in mind and body; and even in those points in which some slight resemblance may be traced, there is a still stronger dissimilitude than likeness. There is, for instance, great simplicity of character in both; but the vulgar simplicity of the squire is as different in quality and degree from the pure-minded simplicity of the Knight, as the simplicity of Roderigo is from that of Othello, the Moor. It is curious to observe how Don Quixote's superior, though warped understanding, and his fine though disordered imagination, at last exercise a complete control over the literal mind of Sancho Panza. With all his shrewdness he is long before he discovers his master's madness, though he is such a frequent eye-witness of his extraordinary mistakes. His master's conversation is so manifestly superior to the suggestions of his own mind, that he is half inclined to distrust the evidences of his senses, and believe the Knight is less mistaken than he appears to be. He makes little doubt of obtaining the government of the island promised by Don Quixote, and comforts himself with this expectation when he is suffering from the clubs of the Yanguesian carriers. The following conversation between Sancho and the woman at the inn, when he and his master put up after the pommeling, is highly characteristic:—

"What is this Cavalier called? quoth the Austurian Maritornes. 'Don Quixote de la Mancha,' answered Sancho Panza, 'he is a knight-errant, and one of the best and most valiant that has been seen this long time in the world.' 'What is a knight-errant?' replied the wench. 'Are you such a novice, that you do not know that?' answered Sancho Panza. 'Then learn, sister of mine, that a knight-errant, is a thing that, before you can count two, may be cudgelled and an emperor;—to-day he is the most unfortunate creature in the world, and the most necessitous; and to-morrow, will have two or three crowns of kingdoms to give to his squire.' 'How comes it then to pass, that you, being squire to this worthy a gentleman,' said the hostess, 'have not yet, as it seems, got so much as an earldom?' 'It is early days yet,' answered Sancho; 'for it is but a month since we set out in quest of adventures, and hitherto we have met with none that deserve the name. And sometimes a man looks for one thing, and finds another. But if my master, Don Quixote, should recover of this wound or fall, and I am not disabled thereby, I would not truck my hopes for the best title in Spain.'"

There is a fine stroke of nature in that passage, in which Sancho is represented as under no alarm as to his own capability to discharge with perfect propriety the great duties pertaining to the office of a Governor, but as being somewhat puzzled about his wife's qualifications to share his dignity.

" 'So then,' said Sancho to his master, 'if I were to be king by any of those miracles you are pleased to mention, Mary Gutierrez, my crooked rib, would at least come to be a queen, and my children infantas?' 'Who doubts it?' said Don Quixote. 'I doubt it,' replied Sancho Panza, 'for I am verily persuaded, that if God were to rain down kingdoms upon the earth, none of them would sit seemly upon the head of Mary Gutierrez; for you must know, Sir, she is not worth three farthings for a queen. The title of Countess, with the help of God and good friends, would sit better upon her.' 'Recommend the matter to Providence, Sancho,' answered Don Quixote, 'and he will do what is best for her: but do thou have a care not to debase thy mind so low, as to content thyself with being less than a lord-lieutenant.' 'Sir, I will not,' answered Sancho, especially having so great a man for my master as your worship, who will know how to give us whatever is most fitting, and what I am best able to bear.'
* * * * * 'Do you think,' quoth Sancho, 'I should know how to give authority to indignity?' 'Dignity, thou shouldst say, not indignity,' said his master. 'So let it be,' answered Sancho Panza; 'I dare say, I shall do well enough with it; for I assure your worship I was once beadle of a company, and the beadle's gown became me so well, that every one said, I had a presence fit to be a warden.' "

Sancho had as little notion of the value of military honor as Falstaff, and thought with him that discretion was the better part of valour. He cared less for disgraces than for bruises.

Let us now turn to the pages of the *Spectator*. A higher compliment cannot possibly be paid to the fine genius of Addison than to associate his Sir Roger de Coverley with Falstaff and Don Quixote. It would be preposterous overpraise to compare Addison as a dramatist or as an author generally with Shakespeare or Cervantes; but the single character of Sir Roger de Coverley would not have been unworthy of any writer that the world has yet produced. It exhibits not, indeed, the fertility of imagination and strength of hand that are displayed in the conception and embodiment of Falstaff and Don Quixote; but it is touched with traits of humour that have never been surpassed in delicacy and truth.* The highest perfection in these respects is not unworthy of being ranked with the different orders of excellence exhibited in the delineations of Shakespeare and Cervantes. There are painters of greater vigour and versatility than Raphaëlle himself, but who do not therefore lead us to undervalue his unrivalled purity and refinement. If Addison had produced a few other characters as exquisite

* No slight portion of the humour in the characters of Falstaff and Don Quixote depends upon their external appearance. It is not so with Sir Roger de Coverley, nor even with Sterne's Uncle Toby.

in conception and as highly finished as his Sir Roger de Coverley, his name would probably have stood in the first rank of British genius, but a single fine picture of this nature was not sufficient to rescue him from the comparatively humble station which he occupies as a writer of elegant moral essays and of a play, which, with all its sonorous rhetoric, is singularly deficient in dramatic truth and in the spirit of genuine poetry.

The world would have had little to regret, if Addison's contributions to English Literature had been confined to the papers in the *Spectator*, especially devoted to Sir Roger de Coverley, and a few others of a miscellaneous nature, including the Vision of Mirza and the reflections in Westminster Abbey. But the loss of these would leave an hiatus that could never be filled up by another hand.

The enviable fame of being the intellectual parent of Sir Roger de Coverley has been disputed on behalf of Sir Richard Steele, on the ground of his having first introduced him in the account of the Club in the second number of the *Spectator*: but we are to recollect, that the notice of him amongst the other members is a mere outline; that it is but fair to conclude that Addison and Steele had sat together in consultation, and exchanged hints and suggestions as to the persons of which the Club was to be composed; and that unquestionably the best and greatest number of papers on the subject of Sir Roger's eccentricities were from the pen of the former, and that he is known to have taken upon himself the charge of preserving a due consistency in the character. It is said that he was so vexed with either Steele or Budgell, (for it is uncertain which wrote the obnoxious paper*) because one of them had made the Knight walk arm and arm with a woman of the town, that he swore with some vehemence that he would himself kill Sir Roger, lest somebody else should murder him.

The first outline of the character is not sketched with Addisonian delicacy, though it is more than probable that the general idea and some of the *leading traits* were suggested by Addison himself. Mention is made of Sir Roger's ill success with the widow, which is very injudiciously followed up with a hint, which Addison could never have given, that he "grew humble in his desires, and frequently offended in point of chastity with beggars and gypsies." It is also added, that there is such a *mirthful* cast in his behaviour that

* It is more probable that the paper was Steele's than Budgell's, as the anecdote is told by Budgell himself, who was not very likely to have mentioned it, if he had written the paper that occasioned Addison's indignation.

he is more *beloved* than *esteemed*. This is making almost another Falstaff of him ; and Addison, who has so delicately explained the difference between mirth and cheerfulness, would never have made his favorite character a man of merriment. In his own papers he has taken care to represent him as something better than a boon companion, and to make him as much esteemed as beloved. Sir Richard Steele describes the knight as "a gentleman very singular in his behaviour, but whose singularities proceed from his good senso, and are contradictions to the manners of the world, only as he thinks the world is in the wrong." But there is assuredly more good sense in complying with the prevalent forms and modes (for it is in these alone that he is singular) than in an endeavour to breast the stream. Addison may be supposed to have expostulated with his friend and coadjutor on these points, for in number 113, which is written by Steele, Sir Roger is represented as a man who is so far from being merry, that he is perpetually haunted by the recollection of his bad success in love, a misfortune which has "*ever since affected his words and actions.*" "I am convinced," continues the writer, "that the widow is the secret cause of all that inconsistency which appears in some parts of my friend's discourse." Addison himself invariably attributes the knight's eccentricities not to "*good sense,*" but to an unrequited passion for the widow. One cannot help wishing that Addison had kept Sir Roger entirely to himself, and there would then have been no inconsistencies in this most charming portrait. It is but bare justice, however, to remark that the number of the *Spectator*, from which we have just been quoting, is a very pleasing one, and does credit to Sir Richard Steele. If all his papers had been written with the same success, we should not have regretted that Addison had left so much to his hand. But if we object to Steele's touches, we have greatly more reason to object to the supernumerary daubs of Eustace Budgell, "the man that used to call Addison, cousin." In number 116, that person, in total disregard of the character of the Knight, has made him "not scruple to own amongst his most intimate friends," that in order to establish his reputation as a huntsman, "he had *secretly* sent for a number of foxes out of other counties, which he used to turn loose about the country by night that he might the better signalize himself in their destruction the next day." Sir Roger was not the man to be up to *secret* and disingenuous tricks of this nature.

Steele in his first paper on Sir Roger, very pleasantly represents the Knight as always talking with the servants as he went up stairs, at whatever house he visited : but Addison

improves this trait, by making him not merely gossip with them in a style that might render them a little too familiar with him in return, but adopt a tone indicative of a happy mixture of the father and the master.

Parson Adams* by Uncle Toby, the Vicar of Wakefield and Sir Roger de Coverley, are all purely national characters, and a native of England may well be proud that they are by no means exaggerations of English virtue. Proud too may he also be that they are the creations of English genius.

The merit of Addison's humour consists in its utter absence of all caricature. It never borders upon farce. It is often rather hinted than expressed, and more is meant than reaches the ear. He raises a pleasant smile, and conjures up a whole train of characteristic images at a single touch. There is no force of outline—nothing is emphatic or overwrought, and yet all is exquisitely distinct and well defined. He has the art to conceal his art. His happiest strokes appear careless and unpremeditated. Thus vulgar readers are apt to underrate him, because they see no marks of effort. The broad humour of Smollet is more effective with such judges, but if that writer had been called upon for a sketch of Sir Roger, his performance would have resembled the altered picture of the Knight, which an old servant of his had used as a sign-post to an inn. Sir Roger's modesty thought it too great an honour for any man under a duke to have his head swinging in the wind on a country sign-board, and directed that it should be converted into a Saracen's head. Notwithstanding the exaggerated features, a distant and ludicrous resemblance still remained. Until Addison appeared, humour had always been associated with some taint of indecency. But he has shown us that it stands in no need of such spurious aid. It is a pity that Smollet, Sterne, and Swift, did not follow his example. Goldsmith alone of Addison's successors has equalled him in purity. Addison could bring Sir Roger into an association with the Gypsies, without staining his moral character, and carefully avoids the indecent insinuations of Steele. As a fine specimen of his humour, we shall extract a portion of the account of the interview with those swarthy vagabonds.

"Sir Roger observing that I listened with great attention to his account of a people who were so entirely new to me, told me, that, if I would, they should tell us our fortunes. As I was very well pleased with the knight's proposal, we rid up and communicated our hands to them. A Casandra of the crew,

* Fielding is as superior to Smollet as Cervantes is to LeSage. LeSage and Smollet are painters of manners, and not of universal nature. Their merit, however, in their own line is unequalled.

after having examined my lines very diligently, told me, that I loved a pretty maid in a corner, that I was a good woman's man, with some other particulars, which I do not think proper to relate. My friend Sir Roger alighted from his horse, and exposing his palm to two or three that stood by him, they crumpled it into all shapes, and diligently scanned every wrinkle that could be made in it; when one of them, who was older and more sun-burnt than the rest, told him, that he had a widow in his line of life. Upon which the knight cried, "Go, go, you are an idle baggage;" and at the same time smiled upon me. The gipsy finding he was not displeased in his heart, told him after farther inquiry into his hand, that his true love was constant, and that she would dream of him to-night. My old friend cried pish, and bid her go on. The gipsy told him that he was a bachelor, but would not be so long; and that he was dearer to somebody than he thought. The knight still repeated, "She was an idle baggage," and bid her go on. "Ah, master," says the gipsy, "that roguish leer of yours makes a pretty woman's heart ache; you have not that sniper about the mouth for nothing."—The uncouth gibberish with which all this was uttered, like the darkness of an oracle, made us the more attentive to it. To be short, the knight left the money with her that he had crossed her hand with, and got up again on his horse.

"As we were riding away, Sir Roger told me, that he knew several sensible people who believed these gipsies now and then foretold very strange things; and for half an hour together, appeared more jocond than ordinary. In the height of his good-humour, meeting a common beggar upon the road, who was no conjurer, as he went to relieve him he found his pocket was picked; that being a kind of paluistry at which this race of vermin are very dexterous."

The characteristic description of Sir Roger's behaviour at the play, seems to have given Fielding the hint for the amusing criticisms of Partridge. The Knight is, perhaps, more at home in the parish church, and is equally entertaining and delightful.

"As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it, he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees any body else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servants to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions. Sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing of the Psalms, half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces amen three or four times to the same prayer; and sometimes stands up when every body else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

"I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend, in the midst of the service, calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about, and not disturb the congregation. This John Matthews, it seems, is remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. This authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see any thing ridiculous in his behaviour; besides that the general good sense and worthiness of his character make his friends observe these little singularities as foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities."

In Sir Roger's manners at Westminster Abbey, we observe that Addison allows him just sufficient sense to set off his excessive simplicity. His inviting the interpreter to call upon him at his house, and talk over the subject of his explanations, is an exquisite stroke of humour, and shows at a glance

the singleness of heart and ignorance of the world which are amongst his leading characteristics.

"I must not omit, that the benevolence of my good old friend, which flows out towards every one he converses with, made him very kind to our interpreter, whom he looked upon as an extraordinary man ; for which reason he shook him by the hand at parting, telling him, that he should be very glad to see him at his lodgings in Norfolk-buildings, and talk over these matters with him more at leisure."

Addison rarely aimed at mere wit, and had no turn for caricature ; but in that delicate and genial humour which wins from the gravest reader a quiet smile—in that subtle and good-natured irony which allows us to love and even reverence the objects of our mirth—in that playful portraiture of foibles and eccentricities in which the artist contrives to insinuate a generous reference to the nobler qualities with which they may happen to be associated—and in short, in that indescribable charm diffused over productions in which exquisite taste and gentle pathos are combined with a sense of the ridiculous, he is still without a rival.

Let us now turn from Sir Roger de Coverley to a kindred spirit—Sterne's Uncle Toby, who has quite as much simplicity as Sancho Panza himself, but with an infinitely finer nature. There seems to be in all humour a principle of strong contrast, which causes a painter of manners to throw in his points of opposition as freely as an artist distributes his light and shade upon the canvas. The fat and mirthful Falstaff has his foils in Silence and Justice Shallow. The spare knight of La Mancha is set off to advantage by the proximity of Sancho. Sir Roger de Coverley's pleasant sense of his own importance in his country, his cheerful garrulity and his busy benevolence are well opposed to the silence and sensitive modesty of his friend the *Spectator* ; and nothing can be more humorously at variance than the restless and speculative spirit of Mr. Shandy and the imperturbable temper of my uncle Toby. The calm simplicity with which My Uncle confounds his metaphysical and irritable brother, with some reply to his fine spun speculations, as far from the point as Falstaff's replies to the Chief Justice, when the knight affected deafness, and which drives Mr. Shandy into a state of perplexity that makes him bite his lips with vexation, is inexpressibly diverting. But exquisite as is the humour displayed in the delineation of my uncle Toby's character, it is not the point of the picture that is the most precious. It is his unaffected goodness of nature that leaves the strongest impression on the mind amidst all his amusing eccentricities. His courage and gentleness, his unconscious superiority to all mankind in purity and tenderness of heart, and his unboast-

ful patience under suffering, are the qualities that most endear him to the reader. It has been well said, that his character is a compliment to human nature. Had his head been equal to his heart, he would have been almost like a god ; but it is by no means certain that we should have loved him better. He is the very personification of benevolence. He has not the heart to retaliate upon a fly. "Go, says he, one day at dinner to an overgrown one which had buzzed about his nose, and tormented him cruelly all dinner time," (no small trial of the temper !) "and which, after infinite attempts, he had caught at last ;—'I'll not hurt a hair of thy head : 'Go,' says he, lifting up the sash, and opening his hand as he spoke, to let it escape ;—'Go, poor devil, get thee gone, why should I hurt thee ? *This world is surely wide enough to hold both thee and me.*" Undoubtedly, this is in the finest spirit of Christianity.

Doctor Johnson used to say, that no one would eat a slice of plum-pudding the less on account of the death or affliction of his dearest friend. Let us see how my uncle Toby receives the statement of the distress of a perfect stranger. This passage occurs in the most pathetic episode that was ever written, the story of Le Fevre.

"Has he a son with him, then ?" said my uncle Toby.—A boy, replied the landlord, of about eleven or twelve years of age ; but the poor creature has tasted almost as little as his father ; he does nothing but mourn and lament for him night and day. He has not stirred from the bed-side these two days.

"My uncle Toby laid down his knife and fork, and thrusts his plate from before him, as the landlord gave him the account ; and Trim, without being ordered, took it away, without saying one word, and, in a few minutes after, brought him his pipe and tobacco."

So again, when Corporal Trim gives an account of the attention of the poor son of Le Fevre to his dying father, how exquisitely true is the feeling which prompted my uncle Toby with a wish that he were asleep. No ordinary author would have hit upon so delicate a touch of nature.

"I wish, said my uncle Toby, with a deep sigh—I wish, Trim, I was asleep.

"Your honour, replied the Corporal, is too much concerned. Shall I pour your honour out a glass of sack to your pipe ?—Do, Trim, said my uncle Toby."

How finely is the humanity of my uncle distinguished from that of Mr. Shandy and his brother.

"Nature is nature, said Jonathan.—And that is the reason, cried Susannah, I so much pity my mistress.—She will never get the better of it.—Now I pity the Captain the most of any one in the family, answered Trim.—Madam will get ease of heart in weeping,—and the Squire in talking about it,—but my poor Master will keep it all in silence to himself.—I shall hear him sigh in his bed for a whole month together, as he did for Lieutenant Le Fevre. An' please you

Honour, do not sigh so piteously, I would say to him as I lay beside him.—I cannot help it, Trim, my Master would say ;—'tis so melancholy an accident,—I cannot get it off my heart.—Your Honour fears not death yourself.—I hope, Trim, I fear nothing, he would say, but the doing a wrong thing.—Well, he would add, whatever betides, I will take care of Le Fevre's boy.—And with that, like a quieting draught, his Honour would fall asleep."

My Uncle Toby cannot even curse the father of all evil :—

"I declare, quoth my uncle Toby, my heart would not let me curse the Devil himself with so much bitterness.—He is the father of curses, replied Dr. Slop.—So am not I, replied my uncle.—But he is cursed and damn'd already, to all eternity, replied Dr. Slop.

"I am sorry for it, quoth my uncle Toby.

"Dr. Slop drew up his mouth, and was just beginning to return my uncle Toby the compliment of his Who—u—u—, or interjectional whistle,—when the door hastily opening in the next chapter but one,—put an end to the affair."

Trim is a kind of Sancho Panza to this gentle Quixote, but as much surpasses his brother squire in the qualities of the heart as his master surpasses the knight of La Mancha, who was nevertheless by no means ordinarily gifted as a man of virtue. The two masters are equally desirous to make their servants comfortable ; but, it is curious to observe, that Don Quixote is unable to suppress a reference to his position as a gentleman, while my uncle Toby thinks exclusively of the convenience of his faithful adherent. Both servants are disposed to decline availing themselves of their master's kindness, Trim from pure respect, and Sancho Panza with characteristic selfishness and vulgar cunning, because he thinks he shall enjoy himself better in taking his meals alone :—

"My uncle Toby was one evening getting his supper, with Trim sitting behind him at a small sideboard,—I say, sitting,—for, in consideration of the Corporal's lame knee (which sometimes gave him exquisite pain) when my uncle Toby dined or supped alone, he would never suffer the Corporal to stand ; and the poor fellow's veneration for his master was such, that, with a proper artillery, my uncle Toby could have taken Dendermond itself, with less trouble than he was able to gain this point over him ; *for many a time when my uncle Toby supposed the Corporal's leg was at rest, he would look back, and detect him standing behind him with the most dutiful respect.*—This bred more little squabbles between them, than all other causes for five-and-twenty years together."

Let us contrast the above with the account of Don Quixote's condescension to his squire in the goatherd's hut. Perhaps in a finer dwelling and in a finer company he would have been less obliging :—

"The knight sat down, and Sancho remained standing to serve the cup, which was of horn. His master, seeing him thus stationed, said to him : 'That you may see, Sancho, the intrinsic worth of knight-errantry, and how fair a prospect its meanest retainers have of speedily gaining the respect and esteem of the world, my will is, that you sit here by my side, and in company with these good folks, and that you be one and the same thing with me, who am your master and natural lord ; that you eat from off my plate, and drink of the same

cup in which I drink : for the same may be said of knight-errantry, which is said of love, that it makes all things equal.' 'I give you my most hearty thanks, sir,' said Sancho ; ' but let me tell your worship, that, provided I have victuals enough, I can eat as well, or better, standing, and alone by myself, than if I were seated close by an emperor. And further, to tell you the truth, what I eat in my corner, without compliments or ceremonies, though it were nothing but bread and an onion, relishes better than turkeys at other folks' tables, where I am forced to chew leisurely, drink little, wipe my mouth often, neither sneeze nor cough when I have a mind, nor do other things which I may do when alone and at liberty. So that, good sir, as to these honors your worship is pleased to confer on me, as a menial servant, and Hanger-on of knight-errantry, being squire to your worship, be pleased to convert them into something of more use and profit to me ; for, though I place them to account as received in full, I renounce them from this time forward to the end of the world.

We have already said so much about Sterne in a preceding article that we shall not dwell further upon his merits on this occasion.

LINES

WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM PRESENTED TO A LADY BY THE AUTHOR.

LADY, when o'er these leaves thy bright eye strayeth,
Say, can thy heart forget the friendly giver ?
When on the stream of life that ne'er delayeth
Our barks part company, perchance for ever,
Say, wilt thou then remember one whose sorrow
At the sad thought of severance, is sincerer
Than many a bard's who grief's low voice may borrow
And charm with sweeter sounds the cheated hearer ?

Time rusheth onward like a rapid river ;
Against its furious force no mortal wadeth ;
And like a wave on which the sunbeams quiver
Each bright-faced pleasure lifts its form and fadeth.
There is no permanence for earthly glory
Or earthly bliss, and dearest friends must sever ;
The fair, the brave, the youthful, and the hoary,
Have proved alike that joy is stable never.

And is there no dear resting place for *feeling*
Amid the giddy whirl of life's mutation ?
Ah, yes ! for love's and friendship's fond revealing
The true heart is a fixed and holy station.
I'll seek not then for Fortune's sweet beguiling,
Nor fear her frown, if thou'lt remember me ;
While in thine heart fair Friendship sitteth smiling,
Lady, I'll think exultingly of thee.

STANZAS.

I.

OH ! deem not that my heart is cold,
 Though 'mid the social throng
 I silent sit, as if controlled
 By some deep sense of wrong ;
 It is not that the voice of mirth
 Sounds harshly in mine ear,
 Nor that my soul denies the worth
 Of Friendship's smile sincere :—

II.

But oft upon my sunniest hour
 A fitful sadness falls,
 And shades prophetic round me lour
 'Till every scene appals.
 I could not tell thee whence or why
 Comes this o'erwhelming change,
 That makes what else might charm mine eye
 Seem desolate and strange.

III.

As sometimes o'er the brightest day
 The sudden shadows sail,
 So dreams of darkness and dismay
 O'er Life's best hopes prevail.
 I see such mystic visions now
 And tremble at my fears,—
 Oh ! then, forgive my clouded brow,
 My silence and my tears !

 LINES

WRITTEN ON THE RUINS OF RAJHMAHAL.

HAIL, strange, hail ! whose eye shall here survey
 The path of Time, where ruin marks his way,
 When wildly moans the solemn midnight bird,
 And the gaunt Jackal's piercing cry is heard ;
 If thine the soul with sacred ardour fraught,
 Rapt in the poet's dream, or sage's thought,
 To thee, these mouldering walls a voice shall raise,
 And sadly tell how earthly pride decays ;
 How human hopes, like human works, depart,
 And leave behind the ruins of the heart !

MACBETH.

WHAT a crowded picture!—and yet in no degree is it deficient in breadth and unity of effect. The lights and shadows, however startling, all serve to bring out the leading purpose of the poet. The gentle and trustful character of the gracious Duncan—the wild ambition of his murderer—the feminine fierceness and traitorous machinations of that bold, bad, strong-minded woman, Lady Macbeth—her steady unhesitating resolution—the scrupulous, faltering, wavering conduct of her husband—the cold-blooded, malicious witch-prophets, with whom fair is foul and foul is fair—the change from *double double* toil and trouble of these unearthly ministers of mortal evil, and the wild blasted heath on which they meet, to the exquisitely quiet scene before the castle of Macbeth so soon to resound with shouts of horror—Lady Macbeth's remembrance of her venerable parent in the midst of murderous thoughts—*Had he not resembled my father as he slept I had done it*—the silence of night, broken by the fearful knocking at the gate—the death-slumber of Duncan amidst the living uproar,

Wake Duncan with by knocking,
I would thou could'st—

and the terrible cry of Macduff .

O horror ! horror ! horror !
Tongue nor heart cannot conceive nor name thee :—

All these characters and incidents and circumstances so skilfully, so dramatically, so truthfully contrasted, bewilder us with a variety of emotions, carry us away from the world around us, and make us feel that we are indeed in the hands of the greatest poet of the world.*

It has been observed that most of Shakespeare's plays open with consummate art—and that of *Macbeth* is as fine an example of his skill and judgment in this respect as the opening scene of *Hamlet* of which the exquisite propriety is acknowledged by all critics. In the first scene of *Hamlet*—as

* The serene aspect of the Castle of Macbeth as first presented to us, is, as Sir John Reynolds well remarks, like a specimen of *repose* in painting.

Duncan.—This castle has a pleasant seat ; the air
Nimble and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

Banquo.—This guest of summer
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
By his loved mansionry that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here ; no jutty, frieze,
Buttress nor coigne of vantage but this bird
Hath made its pendent bed and procreant cradle.
Where they most breed and haunt I have observed
The air is delicate.

is fitting in so philosophical and thoughtful a production, and where the supernatural agency though stern and severe is of a more calm and virtuous character—the time is solemn and serene;—a quiet guard—not a mouse stirring. In the opening scene of *Macbeth* on the contrary, which is a play of action and hurry and tumult and terror—of strange phantoms bringing with them blasts from hell, and with intents wicked and uncharitable—the accessories of the picture are in general of an ominous character, and in keeping with the spirit of the leading actors and the tragical color of the events. The blasted plain or place of meeting of the weird sisters—the storm of thunder and lightning—the fearful intimation that in these grotesque and wild beings all moral qualities are reversed—that with them fair is foul and foul is fair;—all these singularly impressive representations form the key-note to this sublime and powerful production.

1st.—When shall we three meet again ?

In lightning, thunder, or in rain ?

2nd.—When the hurly burly's done,

When the battle's lost and won.

3rd.—That shall be ere set of sun.

1st.—Where the place,

2nd.————— upon the heath

3rd.—There to meet with (brave) Macbeth.

1st.————— I come Gray-Malkin.

All.—Paddock calls—anon.

Fair is foul and foul is fair

Hover through fog and filthy air.

This scene is judiciously brief—it is thus rendered more vision-like and impressive. The mysterious beings

Come like shadows, so depart.

“They vanish”—but they stay quite long enough to leave upon our souls the sense of impending evil. We are prepared by these supernatural agents for the horrors that ensue, and we feel no sense of abruptness, but on the contrary are conscious of an unbroken continuity of the interest when the next scene opens with the enquiry of Duncan, as to the unknown soldier with “dyed garments.”

What bloody man is that ? He can report,

As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt

The newest state.

Macbeth's ambition was originally of an honorable nature, and only became what it was subsequently, “by supernatural soliciting”—by fate and metaphysical aid—seconded by the artful suggestions of his wife, who besides representing the objects of their mutual desire in the most exciting point of view, touched the brave Macbeth, (“well he deserves that name !”) in the weakest part, when she taunted him with *cowardice* and charged him with irresolution—offering to per-

form herself, with her own feminine hand, a task for which *he* had not the nerve. Nothing can be more dramatic or more true to nature than the manner in which Macbeth's more honorable, more generous, more thoughtful, and more considerate nature is made to hesitate at the moral obstacles in his way ; while with the concentration of all feelings upon one purpose, so natural to a passionate and earnest and wilful woman, *she* gazes intently and exclusively at the desired object. Macbeth relents. He is resolved to go no further in this business.

We will proceed no further in this business ;
He hath honored me of late, and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

Who can doubt that his better angel would have remained with Macbeth after this, but for the terrible fierceness of his wife ? Oh woman ! how powerful thou art for good or evil ! Listen to the lady's taunts :—

Lady M—. Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dressed yourself ? Hath it slept since
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely ? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afraid
To be the same in thine own act and valor
As thou art in desire ? Would'st thou have that
Which thou esteemest the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem ;
Letting *I dare not* wait upon *I would*
Like the poor cat in the adage ?

Macbeth——Prythee peace
I dare do all that may become a man
Who dares do more is none.

Lady M—. What beast was it then
That made you break this enterprize to me ?
When you durst do it, then you were a man ;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time, nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both ;
They have made themselves, and that *their* fitness now
Does unmake *you*. I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me :
I would while it was smiling in my face
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
And dashed his brains out, had I so sworn
As you have done to this.

*Macbeth—*If we should fail—

Lady Macbeth. We fail.*

* Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Jamieson tells us, adopted three different intonations of these two words—*we fail* ;—First a contemptuous interrogation—*We fail ?* Then an accent of indignant astonishment—*We fail ?* laying the emphasis on the pronoun. Lastly she fixed on the calm, self-possessed—resolute—*we fail*.

But screw your courage to the sticking place
And we'll *not* fail.

The influence exercised over Macbeth by his wife seems generally taken as proof of superior intellectual power. This is surely a mistake. It is the influence of deeper passion and not of higher intellect. A mind in a state of earnest excitement generally succeeds in bending to its will the more serene or thoughtful or less impassioned temperament; for passion acts more powerfully than reason. Pope speaks of "*the headlong lioness*." Was not Lady Macbeth a *headlong lioness*? Byron in his *Sardanapalus* beautifully illustrates the characteristic fierceness of the female nature under great excitement. Myrrha—though no Amazon—though in no degree masculine in body or in mind, was fiercer than the fiercest of the male warriors in the defence of her luxurious lord and lover.

You see this night
Made warriors of more than me. I paused
To look upon her, and her kindled cheek;
Her large black eyes that flashed through her long hair
As it streamed o'er her: her blue veins that rose
Along her most transparent brow; her nostril
Dilated from its symmetry; her lips
Apart; her voice that clove through all the din,
As a lute pierceth through the cymbals' clash,
Jarred but not drowned by the loud brattling; her
Waved arms, more dazzling with their own born whiteness
Than the steel her hand held which she caught up
From a dead soldier's grasp; all these things made
Her seem unto the troops a prophetess
Of victory or victory herself
Come down to hail us hers.

And to the supposition of his stern brother that in the hour of danger Sardanapalus found Myrrha

Herding with the other females
Like frightened antelopes—

The king replies—

No: like the dam
(Of the young lion, femininely raging
And femininely meaneth furiously
Because all passions in excess are female)
Against the hunter flying with her cub.
She urged on with her voice and gesture and
Her floating hair and flashing eyes, the soldiers
In the pursuit.

It would seem from this that Lady Macbeth's character though savage is not altogether unwomanly—though it may seem somewhat ungallant to say so: But it is only meant that in whatever direction woman ventures—the right or the wrong—she is more earnest—less reflecting—more resolute—more wilful than man. It is a common observation that good women are better than good men—bad men not so bad as bad women.

But be this as it may, Lady Macbeth, whether intellectually superior to her lord or not, possessed more than sufficient sagacity to read his nature—(and indeed what woman cannot better understand her husband's character than *he does her's* ?) She saw with the quick eye of her sex that he was not without ambition though without "the illness that should attend it." What he would highly that would he holily. He had too much of the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way. It required all her wondrous energy—all her woman's influence—to keep his courage to the sticking place ; and this not from any natural timidity on his part—he was still *brave* Macbeth—but from the compunctious visitings of a noble nature—a nature not yet corrupted. Even after he has yielded in some degree to "that suggestion whose horrid image did unfix his hair and make his seated heart knock at his ribs against the use of nature," his better spirit was at work within him, and might easily have led him back into the path of peace and honor, but for the dreadful circumvention of that evil genius—his wife. He was visited in his gentler mood by the image of the gracious and venerable Duncan—so clear in his great office—who bore his faculties so meekly. Macbeth remembered that his sovereign had heaped high honors on his house—that under *his* roof the King was in double trust—as a kinsman and a subject—strong both against the deed—that on his host he should against his murderers shut the door, not bear the knife himself. But the incessant iteration of strong inducements by an associate of more powerful passions than our own is generally irresistible in the end. Macbeth's very virtues combined with his weaknesses to make him an easier victim. He loved this passionate creature. He was ambitious—"that last infirmity of noble mind." And in despite of the scruples of his conscience—and the milk of human kindness in his nature—she soon made him guilty of acts that his own heart abhorred. Even when the guilty deed is done—and the compunctious visitings of his nature return—but return too late—his bold bad wife mocks him with the old intolerable insult upon his want of nerve. She knows her man.

My hands are of your color but I shame
To wear a heart so white.

He is *brave* Macbeth—in all virtuous deeds—but he becomes a coward in his own esteem, when he has deserted the path of honor and of virtue.

For conscience doth make cowards of us all
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.

He is made to exclaim

Whence is that knocking ?
How is it with me when every noise appals me ?
What hands are here ! Ha ! they pluck out mine eyes !
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand ? No ; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine
Making the green—one red.

This is Shakespeare's favorite moral—namely—that the noblest and bravest natures are most subdued by a sense of guilt, and that honesty is the only true policy. He makes Macbeth “eat his meals in fear.” His sleep is haunted by terrible dreams. He envies even the murdered dead.

Better be with the dead
Whom we to gain our place have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave ;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.
Treason has done his worst, nor steel nor poison
Malice domestic, foreign levy—nothing
Can touch *him* further.

Lady Macbeth has the same sentiment

Nought's had—all's spent,
When our desire is got without content.
Tis safer to be that which we destroy
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

Fit retribution ! We are made to feel from the first that sin will receive its punishment. When Macbeth had slain Duncan in his sleep there was no more sleep for himself on this side of the grave. He begins to be a-weary of the sun.

I have lived long enough—my may of life
Hath fallen into the scar, the yellow leaf,
And that which should accompany old age
As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends
I must not look to have, but in their stead
Curses not loud but deep, mouth honor, breath
Which the poor heart would fain deny but dare not.

Even Lady Macbeth—hard as her nature is—is at last subdued ;—she groans by day under the load of fearful recollections—she walks in her sleep at night, haunted by hideous images. I would not have such a heart in my bosom, exclaims the medical attendant who watches her sleep-walking, for the dignity of the whole body.

Oh what a moralist is Shakespeare ! What are all the stilted precepts, or carefully rounded common-places of our philosophers in prose compared with the poet's scenes and portraits of living nature !

While Lady Macbeth sinks into utter hopelessness and

helplessness at the reverse of fortune, as the world darkens round her, Macbeth plucks up a sullen resoluteness from the depths of his despair.

Ring the alarm bell—Blow winds—come rack—
At least we'll die with harness on our back.

But the lady's mind gives way to thick-coming fancies ;
as the Doctor tells Macbeth, who pathetically exclaims

"Cure her of that !

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a written sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivion antidote
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of the perilous stuff
That weighs upon the heart ?

What is the moral of the tragedy of Macbeth ? Not merely that ambition, misdirected, is an evil passion—but that the finest heart may be utterly perverted by the influence of a less noble nature—by evil suggestions rendered familiar by iteration and addressed to some predominant weakness—that no virtue is secure without fortitude and self-controul—that we should examine minutely and severely our own conduct—especially when we have a secret consciousness that our ruling passion is in the wrong direction and is fed by "thick coming fancies" that increase in force as we continue to welcome and indulge them—and that the sense of guilt is a terrible humiliation, and utterly inconsistent with true courage or true felicity.

NOON.

WRITTEN IN INDIA.

THE lord of day, with fierce resistless might,
Clad in his robes of glory, reigned on high,
And checked the timid gaze of mortal eye
With the refulgence of his forehead bright.
I marked with fevered brow his form of light
Glare on the silver wave that slumbered nigh,
And sought the dryad's haunt, where zephyr's sigh
Came like a hallowed tone of sad delight
To soothe the wanderer's soul:—Beneath the shade
Of wide root-dropping banians, fit to be,
At such a time, the dreaming minstrel's bower,
On bright-winged visions flew the noon-tide hour ;
While Fancy's hand those dear home-scenes portrayed
Whose living charms I never more may see !

FRIENDS.

"Of all the heavenly gifts, that mortal men commend,
What trusty treasure in the world can countervail a friend?"

*Nicholas Grimoald,**

"In the morning, after the priest had given him the last sacraments," he said
—"There is nothing that is meritorious but virtue and friendship; and, indeed,
friendship itself is only a part of virtue."

Spence's Anecdotes of Pope.

"The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel."

Shakespeare.

MOST men flatter themselves that they are not only capable of friendship, but that they have many friends. To a superficial observer, human life appears to abound in friendships; but it presents a very different aspect to those who can penetrate beneath the surface. "Friendship is so rare," observes Sir Philip Sidney, "that it is almost doubtful, whether it is a thing indeed, or a mere word." Poets and moralists have concurred in eulogising its advantages, and lamenting its uncertainty. A familiar anecdote on the subject has been versified by Cowper:—

"Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe
Swinging the parlour door upon its hinge.
Dreading a negative, and over-awed
Lest he should trespass, begged to go abroad.
Go fellow! whither?—turning short about—
Nay. Stay at home—you're always going out.

'Tis but a step, sir, just at the street's end,
For what?—An please your sir, to see a friend.
A friend! Horatio cried, and seemed to start,—
Yes, marry, shalt thou, and with all my heart.
And fetch my cloak; for, though the night be raw,
I'll see him too—the first I ever saw!"

"It is with friends as with ghosts," says Rochefoucault; "things that every body talks of, and scarcely any hath seen."

But, however rare may be real friendship, men are so little formed to live alone, that when they cannot grasp its substance, they love to cheat themselves with its shadow. They who have the fewest friends have often the most acquaintances. The latter are a kind of proxies for the former, and usually bear the same name, though they are really of a very different character. Perhaps faith in some

* An old English Poet—the second writer of blank-verse after Surrey. He flourished in the early part of the 16th century.

matters is less involuntary than philosophers have supposed; as nothing seems more common than for men to believe according to their wishes, and to reject what is opposed to their vanity or their interest. Thus we frequently find a person of shrewdness and good sense congratulating himself on a long list of supposed friends, who in reality are heartless and selfish beings, whose characters are as clear as daylight to all the rest of the world. Men protect themselves from the fear of infidelity in friendship, and the horror of discovering that they are alone in the world, by a voluntary blindness. The greatest optimist in friendship is indisposed to put the truth and constancy of his friends to a very severe trial. He dreads to be undeceived. It is generally considered a very dangerous thing to borrow money from a friend, or to rival him in love or fame. That which is commonly called friendship would not stand the test Goldsmith's story of *Alcander and Septimius*,* in which one friend resigns the hand of his mistress to the other, with such a magnanimous self-sacrifice, is a pretty romance, but has no counterpart in common life.

Mr. Landor in his "Imaginary Conversations" makes Cicero thus express himself—"Could I begin my existence again, and what is equally impossible, could I see before me all I have seen, I would have few acquaintances, fewer friendships, no familiarities. This rubbish, for such it generally is, collecting at the base of an elevated mind, lessens its height and impairs its character." There is no doubt that the being linked by the mere forms and courtesies of society to a very extensive circle, must be injurious alike to a man's ease, purity and independence. He has too many different opinions to study, and too many tastes to satisfy, to be able to indulge his own particular impulses. Instead of standing out boldly and prominently as an individual, he becomes only an insignificant part of the great mass, and is whirled away, like a straw, amidst the general refuse that soils the stream of life. A man of eminent intellectual and moral worth cannot long mingle harmoniously with the crowd without a sacrifice of character. The delicate bloom of virtue is soon rubbed off by a close contact with the world, and the finest thoughts and speculations are exchanged for more vulgar and sordid interests. Unless a man lowers himself to the level of those about him by unworthy compliances, he is regarded with a jealous eye. His superiority is a tacit censure on the rest of the world. They call his integrity churlishness, and

* Borrowed from the 8th Novel of Boccaccio.

his genius eccentricity. "Great wit," especially of that kind which renders a man unfit to mingle with the throng, is always held to be very "nearly allied to madness." He who mixes with the world, and yet endeavours to breast the stream of popular opinion, is considered more odd than wise. Thus a man who has many friends has generally very few worth having, nor does he deserve to have better ones; for it is only by a dishonorable flexibility in his own character that he can surround himself with a host of intimates, all differing more or less from himself, and from each other. The friendship that is of any value consists in a close communion of mind, as well as heart, and such is the selfishness of most men, the inequality of human capacities, and the endless variety of dispositions, that nothing is so rare as the union of congenial spirits. A man may pass through a long life without meeting with one companion, into whose breast he could safely pour the secrets of his soul, or from whom he might expect a perfect and disinterested sympathy. Montaigne has some excellent observations on the rarity of friendship, and relates the anecdote of a young soldier, who, when asked by Cyrus, what he would take for a horse with which he had just won the prize at a race, and whether he would exchange him for a kingdom, replied, "No, truly, sir; but I would freely part with him to gain a *friend*, could I find a man worthy of such a relation." When Socrates was asked why he had built so small a house—"Small as it is," he replied, "I wish I had friends enough to fill it."

Roche foucault, who studied human nature closely, observed, that in the misfortunes of our best friends we always find something that does not displease us. Swift has confirmed the truth of this maxim, and has illustrated it by his verses on his own death, in which he anticipates the observations of his surviving friends with great sagacity and a caustic humour. To those who neither analyze their own feelings, nor dive into the hearts of others, this view of human nature may seem as untrue as it is shocking. They perceive not with what eager and indecent haste unhappy intelligence is communicated by *friends*, and how transparent is the veil of sadness that is worn on such occasions. A keen eye may often detect an ill-suppressed smile beneath it, like the sunlight behind an April cloud. I have seen instances in which it has broken out into actual laughter. People are sometimes heard to express a sense of horror at their own indifference to the afflictions of their friends, and half-conscious of a strange internal pleasure, are unable to account for it. It's truly said, that the most difficult of all knowledge is the knowledge of our own hearts. This

secret satisfaction arising from the distresses of others is, owing to the sense of superior fortune, increased, by contrast, and not to any natural malignity of disposition, as might be superficially imagined. All happiness is comparative, and we measure our own lot by that of others. This view of the subject in degree blunts the edge of Rochefoucault's remark, which would otherwise seem a terrible charge against human nature. To enable us to overcome the disposition to congratulate ourselves on our own good fortune at the expense of others, our friendship must be strong indeed. Those who think they have *many* friends of such truth and fervour indulge in a very gross delusion.

A gentleman once gave me a few odd pages, which he got by mere accident, of a work entitled "*The Journal of a Self-Observer*," being the diary of the inmost thoughts and feelings of the celebrated Lavater, a keen student of his own heart and the hearts of others. The Journal was not originally intended for publication. "Lest I should deceive myself," says the author, "I will make a firm resolution never to show these remarks to any person whatever." And he undertakes to put down every thing as truly and as carefully as if he had to read the Journal to his God. The following passage may be given as a specimen of his confessions (more genuine than those of Rousseau), and as a curious evidence of his severe and searching self-study. The book would have delighted Rochefoucault.

"*Sunday, January the seventh.*—When I awoke, a messenger was waiting for me, delivering a letter from my friend ****, at H—, who entreated me to pay him a visit, if possible, for he was very ill.

"I was frightened, and yet this intelligence *had something pleasing in it* though God knows ! I love my friend sincerely ; his death would grieve me much. *It is not the first time that my fright occasioned by afflicting intelligence, seemed to be mixed with secret joy.* I recollect to have felt once on a sudden alarm of fire, something so very pleasing, that, on cool reflection, makes me shudder. Was this sensation the effect of the novelty, and the suddenness of the alarm, or of the presentiment of the concern which those with whom I should have an opportunity of conversing on that incident would show, and which is always somewhat flattering to the narrator ? Or was it the effect of the confused idea of the charges which interrupted the sameness of my thoughts or occupations ? Or was it, which is most likely, the consequence of the joyful sensation of being exempted from the misfortune which befalls or threatens others ?

"I should like to know what passes in the minds of other people, and particularly of those who have an humane, feeling heart, when they are surprised by important, and, at the same time, afflicting intelligence. However, I apprehend that most of them either do not pay proper attention to situations of that kind, or are anxious to hide their feelings from others, and, perhaps, from themselves. Yet, I think, one ought to observe one's self with the utmost care in such cases ; and, in order to recollect afterwards, to one's own benefit the most secret emotions of the mind, one ought to commit them faithfully to writing in the first tranquil moment.

"I communicated the letter to my wife, made preparation for my journey, settled in haste some business, gave some orders, and then stepped into the carriage.

*‘Consternation, anxiety, uneasiness, and a secret satisfaction, on account of the joy, my speedy arrival would afford my friend, but not only on account of that joy, but also of the praise which I expected himself and his family would give me—and shame on account of that satisfaction, succeeded each other, alternately, in the first quarter of an hour.**

“I began to pray: ‘O! my God! how irregular and impure are my thoughts! When will my heart be in such a condition that I shall be able to look upon myself without blushing!—Merciful God! guide my thoughts and sensations, particularly at present.”

Real friendship is almost as exclusive as love, and cannot be diffused over a large circle. I can hardly call that man my friend who cares as much for a hundred other people as he does for me. I am not satisfied with a hundredth share of his heart. He might as well pretend to love as many mistresses. He cannot have an equally deep feeling for them all. In the event of a contrariety of interests amongst them, how is he to act? Every body's friend is no one's. Jealousy is almost as much allied to friendship as to love, and it is more natural to see friends in pairs than in triads or in scores. The close communion of a great number of people is sociality, but not friendship.

Some people talk of friendship as if it were as common a thing as the sexual affection, which is by no means the case. All men at some period of their lives have been fired by the latter passion, but comparatively very few of any age have felt the force of genuine friendship. Love is a compound feeling, and is fed with the grossest food as well as the purest; but friendship is a passion which must exist entirely on a moral or intellectual diet. Though love is more fiery and ardent, it is also more fickle and uncertain. It is subject to a fatal satiety. It is destroyed by fruition. But the appetite of friendship grows with what it feeds on. Love is like a hunter who cares not for the game when once caught, which he may have pursued with the most intense and breathless eagerness. Love is strongest in pursuit, friendship in possession.

And yet after all, perhaps, the best as well as most common sort of friendship is that which succeeds passion in wedded life. A man and his wife, when the love-ardors of youth have cooled, may entertain for each other a more tender and genuine friendship than is, perhaps, quite possible between two associates of the same sex.

The ancient philosophers were enthusiastic advocates of friendship, and amongst the Greeks it was made a point of religion and legislation. But Christianity has been thought by some to nullify this virtue. Soame Jenyns, in his “View

* These are genuine confessions, and show a profound self-knowledge.

of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion," maintains, that it is not consistent with that universal benevolence which is inculcated by the Scriptures.* Dr. Johnson seems to lean to the same opinion, and Shaftesbury in his "Characteristics" insists that private friendship is a virtue purely voluntary in a Christian. He supports his argument with an extract from Bishop Taylor, who observes that the word friendship, in the sense commonly understood by it, is not so much as mentioned in the New Testament.† Boswell records the following conversation on this subject between Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Knowles (a Quaker lady.)

Johnson : " All friendship is preferring the interest of a friend to the neglect or perhaps against the interest of others ; so that an old Greek said, ' he that has friends has no friend.' Now Christianity recommends universal benevolence, to consider all men as our brethren ; which is contrary to the virtue of friendship, as described by the ancient philosophers. Surely, madam, your sect must approve of this ; for you call all men *friends*." *Mrs Knowles* : " We are commanded to do good to all men, but especially to them that are of the household of faith !" *Johnson* : " Well, madam, the household of faith is wide enough." *Mrs Knowles* : " But Doctor, our Saviour had twelve Apostles, yet there was one whom he loved. John was called the disciple whom Jesus loved." *Johnson* : (with eyes sparkling benignantly,) " Very well, indeed, madam. You have said very well." *Boswell* : " A fine application. Pray sir, had you ever thought of it ?" *Johnson* : " I had not, sir."

But though there is certainly a spirit of exclusiveness in friendship itself, it does not follow that it is necessarily opposed to that universal philanthropy which is so incessantly and so beautifully recommended by the Christian religion. To entertain exactly the same esteem and love for all men is utterly impossible, because we esteem and love individuals for qualities with which all men are not equally endowed. There are also natural instincts which interfere with this equality of regard. Every mother must prefer the interest of her own offspring to that of others. All that can be expected from us is, the cultivation of a spirit of charity and good-will towards the whole human race ; and they who are capable of an intense and passionate friendship cannot be cruel or cold-hearted towards any portion of their fellow-creatures. In fact, in the composition of a genuine friendship there are many of the highest and most generous virtues. A merely selfish man cannot be a friend, neither

* " It is totally incompatible," he observes, " with the genius and spirit of the Gospel." Melmoth in his remarks on Cæro's *Lælius* warmly combats this notion.

† But Bishop Heber (who by the way, wrote a Life of Bishop Taylor) made the following remark in a letter to Mr. Hornby : " Whatever may be our prospects of intercourse here, I am not one of those who apprehend that a well-grounded esteem even for earthly beings, will perish with the present world ; and I trust I am not presumptuous in cherishing the hope, that many of the friendships begun here, may be among the sources of our everlasting happiness."

can an evil-minded or a foolish one. Voltaire defines friendship "a tacit contract between two sensible and virtuous persons." "The wicked," he says, "have only accomplices ; the voluptuous, companions ; the interested, associates ; idle men, connexions ; and princes, courtiers." "Cethegus," he adds, "was the accomplice of Cataline, and Mæcenas, the courtier of Octavius ; but Cicero was the *friend* of Atticus."

There are many delightful examples of literary friendship. Perhaps, one reason of the fervour of friendship between men of letters is their facility of mental intercourse. They are in the habit of clothing their most subtle thoughts and associations in a transparent diction. The communion of such men is perfect, and the intense delight with which they compare minds, and kindle at the social collision of their most secret conceptions, is inconceivable by ordinary persons. Their mental characters are more firmly fixed, and their opinions are not liable to be affected by the breath of frivolous scandal or by slight external occurrences. They live as it were in a world of their own, in which there are fewer mutabilities than in the material world with which other men are connected. They do not care for the idle gossip of society. Their conversation is about departed spirits, and is full of glorious abstractions. They are hand and glove with Milton and Shakespeare, with Bacon and with Newton, while they have not even a bowing acquaintance with their next-door neighbour. How beautiful an instance of literary friendship is that of Beaumont and Fletcher, whose labours were so mingled, that no critic has been able to separate them ! Their union is eternal ! It is scarcely necessary to allude to the friendship of Virgil and Horace, Petrarch and Boccaccio, Chaucer and Gower, Surrey and Wyatt, Milton and Marvel, Cowley and Harvey, Isaac Walton and Charles Cotton, Lloyd and Churchill, Pope and Swift, and Byron and Moore, and Shelley and Leigh Hunt. Of these interesting literary friendships almost every one must have read. How touchingly has Gray commemorated his affection for West, in the following Sonnet :

"In vain to me the smiling morning shines,
And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire ,
The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire.
These ears, alas for other notes repine ;
A different object do these eyes require ;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine ;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men ;
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear ;
To warm their little loves the birds complain,
I fruitless mourn for him that cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain."

The friendship of Montaigne and Stephen de Boetius was such as is rarely known in ordinary life,—“ a friendship so entire, and so perfect, that certainly the like is hardly to be found in story.” Nothing can exceed the passionate and disinterested tenderness with which they regarded each other. After the death of Boetius, of which his friend has given us so pathetic a relation, life seemed “ one dark tedious night” to the survivor. “ From the day that I lost him,” says Montaigne, “ I have only languished in life, and the very pleasures that present themselves to me, instead of comforting me, double my affliction for the loss of him. We were half-sharers in every thing ; *and methinks, by outliving him, I defraud him of his share.*” This approaches nearly to Dryden’s somewhat extravagant description of friendship in his “ All for Love.”

“ I was his soul : he lived not but in me ;
We were so closed within each other’s breast ,
The rivets were not found that joined us first ;
That does not reach us yet ; we were so mixed ,
As meeting streams, both to ourselves were lost :
We were one mass : we could not give nor take ,
But from the same ; for he was I, I he .
* * * * *

If I have any joy when thou art absent ,
I grudge it to myself ; *methinks I rob
Thee of thy part .*”

Young puts the loss of a friend in a still stronger light .

“ When friends part
’Tis the survivor dies .”

It is this kind of social intercourse which is described by Seneca. “ Friendship,” says he, “ lays all things common, and nothing can be good to the one that is ill to the other. I do not speak of such a community as to destroy one another’s propriety ; but as the father and mother have two children, not one a piece, but each of them two.” When we consider what are the real claims of friendship, and look around us in the world in search of a true friend, we may well despair of success. He who has one such treasure may think himself supremely fortunate. Ordinary connections in society are merely supported by an interchange of interests, which is interrupted at the first inequality. This commerce of benefits is attended with as much selfishness and mean arithmetic on both sides, as the negotiations of the lowest traders. It resolves itself into the simple question of profit and loss. The general craving for society and intolerance of solitude is not so much traceable to a spirit of sociality as to an uneasy vacancy of mind, and the absence of internal and independent sources of amusement. Most men are anxious to escape from their own thoughts, and dread the

dulness of a self-conversation. They find their own company insupportable, and are sometimes compelled to fly for relief even to those whom they despise. Thus, "kings," as Burke says, "are fond of low company," because in such society they can best forget their own wearisome identity, and throw off that uneasy weight of satiety and care which is peculiar to their isolated condition. The friendship which seems so abundant in general society is a sad illusion, and nothing can be more contradictory and absurd than the manner in which the mass of people speak, in their absence, of those whom they call their friends. They should ask themselves how far they would be ready to sacrifice their own immediate interest for the benefit of these dear associates. If the life of one of them depended on an expensive voyage that was beyond his means, would they pay the cost? If he were to die, would it deprive them of any portion of their usual appetite or sleep? "Not a jot!" Dr. Johnson, who was at least as capable of the virtue of friendship as the generality of men, has very candidly confessed the small extent of his own sympathy in the fate of others. If he had not the requisite fervour and disinterestedness of genuine friendship, he was at all events no hypocrite, and was equally willing to read his own heart, and to lay it open to the gaze of others. When he was asked, what his feeling would be if one of his friends were apprehended for an offence for which he might be hanged; he replied, "I should do what I could to bail him, and give him any other assistance; but if he were once fairly hanged I should not suffer." "Would you eat your dinner that day Sir?" inquired Boswell. "Yes, Sir; and eat it as if he were eating with me. Why, there's Baretto, who is to be tried for his life to-morrow; friends have risen up for him on all sides; yet if he should be hanged, none of them will eat a slice of plum-pudding the less. Sir, that sympathetic feeling goes a very little way in depressing the mind." This seems a disheartening account of human nature; but I am afraid it is the true one. Those who have more sympathy for their fellows are perhaps but rare exceptions to the general character of mankind. Dr. Johnson, cursed as he was with a hypochondriacal temperament, had a deep sense of the necessity of friendship. After the loss of many friends, whose praise he valued, he makes a touching allusion to his desolate condition, in the preface to his Dictionary. "I may surely," says he, "be contented without the praise of perfection, which if I could obtain in this *gloom of solitude*, what would it avail me?" But the death of friends made little impression upon him when he had the means of supplying their place with other associates. He used to talk of neces-

sity of *repairing* his friendships with new acquaintances, a cold and mechanical notion, which shows how little he understood of the depth, and holiness, and continuity of a true affection.* His friendship was selfish and one-sided. He was merely his own friend. The loss of a friend who deserves the name is utterly irreparable. It is a terrible laceration of the heart which never heals.

“ Thy last sigh
Dissolved the charm ; the enchanted earth
Lost all her lustre !”

There is nothing which throws so dark a horror over death as the parting with a dear friend ; and the dreadful thought that we may never meet again, even in a future state, is almost insupportable. The great and awful change which must take place in our nature may annihilate the materials of friendship.

The ancients carried more of this world into their idea of a future state than we do, and cheered their last hours with the hope of again meeting those they loved with much the same personal feeling as that with which they parted. Modern philosophy is on this point perhaps more refined ; but while it renders our future prospect less palpable, it is also less congenial to human associations.

* It must be remembered, however, that even Cicero, in his *Essay on Friendship*, recommends us to repair the loss of old friends by new acquisitions. And Shenstone acknowledges that it was a rule with him whenever he lost a person's friendship to engage a fresh friend in his place. But it is not so easy to engage a friend, as you would a servant, just as you require him. There is a pleasant stanza on this subject in *Don Juan*.

“ O Job ! you had two friends : one's quite enough,
Especially when we are ill at ease ;
They are but bad pilots when the weather's rough,
Doctors less famous for their cures than fees.
Let no man grumble when his friends fall off,
As they will do like leaves at the first breeze :
When your affairs come round, one way or t'other,
Go to the Coffee House and take another.”

The Poet, however, adds in the succeeding stanza—

“ But this is not my maxim ; had it been,
Some heart-aches had been spared me.”

The thought of going to a Coffee House for a new friend was suggested to Lord Byron by a passage in Swift or Walpole, he did not remember which, where it is mentioned that somebody regretting the loss of a friend was answered, “ When I lose one, I go to the St. James's Coffee House, and take another.”

MYSTERY.

THERE is strange life in things inanimate,
 Or things so called, and in this mortal state
 An immortality ! There are no bounds
 To life but *mystery*, and that surrounds
 All forms of earth, and, with its dread controul,
 For ever checks the proud impatient soul,
 Whose aims at hidden things are grasps at air,
 Whose eager gaze is but a blind man's stare.

Bewildered with blank nothingness—(a dense
 Objectless glare)—how oft the horrid sense
 Of loneliness and littleness prevails,
 While the frame trembles and the spirit quails !
 But oh ! this dream-delirium may not last—
 We wake—and when the hideous spell is past
 The mystery remains but not the fear :—
 We know that God himself is every where !

And while this faith can animate and bless
 We feel not lone, forlorn and fatherless,
 With humbled thought, calm hope and sweet content
 We cease to sigh for things for man unmeant,
 But wait the uplifting of the curtain vast
 By hands unseen around the wide world cast.

SONNET,

ON THE DEATH OF

NEVER, oh ! never, this sin-tainted earth,
 The realm of care, hath holier pilgrim trod !
 The priest of Nature, Poetry, and God !
 His words were bodied radiance, and his worth
 An angel's dower. There seemed nor gloom nor dearth
 When he but smiled. His thoughts were lovelier far
 Than flower or gem, or sun, or moon, or star,
 Or river waves that dance in summer mirth.
 Of transitory hopes the base controul
 He proudly spurned for heaven's eternal day.
 A death-spark touched his tenement of clay,
 And forth up-sprang towards its destined goal
 The flame divine. A purer spirit never
 Hath joined the choir that hymn their God for ever.

POETRY OF JOHN BAMPFLYDE.

A CHRISTMAS SONNET,

By John Bampflyde.

With footstep slow, in furry pall yclad.
 With brows inwreathed with holly never sere,
 Old Christmas comes, to close the waned year ;
 And aye the shepherd's heart to make right glad ;
 Who, when his teeming flocks are homeward had,
 To blazing hearth repairs, and nut-brown beer,
 And views well pleased the ruddy prattlers dear
 Hug the gray mongrel ; meanwhile maid and lad
 Squabble for roasted crabs. Thee, Sire, we hail,
 Whether thine aged limbs thou dost enshroud
 In vest of snowy white and hoary veil,
 Or wrapp'st thy visage in a sable cloud :
 Thee we proclaim with mirth and cheer, nor fail
 To greet thee well with many a carol loud.

PERHAPS the name of this writer is not familiar to the generality of our readers ; and yet some of his poems have great merit. Southey has said that Bampflyde's sonnets are the most original in the language. This is not just praise, because they are closely modelled after those of Milton. This spirit of imitation is not so observable in the sonnet above quoted, as in most of the others by the same writer. The following may illustrate the justice of our remark :—

TO THE REDBREAST.

*When that the fields put on their gay attire,
 Thou silent sitt'st near brake or river's brim,
 Whilst the gay* thrush sings loud from coverts dim ;
 But when pale winter lights the social fire,
 And meads with slime are sprent and ways with mire,
 Thou charm'st us with thy soft and solemn hymn
 From battlement, or barn, or haystack trim ;
 And now not seldom tunest, as if for hire,
 Thy thrilling pipe for me, waiting to catch
 The pittance due to thy well warbled song ;
 Sweet bird ! sing on ; for oft near lonely hatch,
 Like thee, myself have pleased the rustic throng,
 And oft for entrance, neath the peaceful thatch,
 Full many a tale have told, and ditty long.*

Bampflyde.

This is a beautiful little poem, but if it be compared with Milton's sonnet to the Redbreast and the sonnet to Mr. Lawrence, we shall find sufficient proof in both of them, especially in the latter, that *originality* is not the characteristic merit of Bampflyde's poetry. His imitations are sometimes so close as to amount to 'plagiarism. To save the reader the trouble of referring to his Milton we quote a part

* The immediate repetition of this epithet was perhaps an oversight occasioned by the after alteration by the writer of the epithet "*gay attire*," to avoid the direct plagiarism from Milton—" *fresh attire* ;" though it must be confessed he was not so anxious to preserve an air of originality in other places.

of the sonnet to Lawrence and mark the corresponding expressions in *Italics*.

Lawrence ! of virtuous father virtuous son,
Now that the fields are dank and ways are mire
 Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire
 Help waste a sullen day, what may be won
 From the hard season gaining ? Time will run
 On smother, still Favonius re-inspire,
 The frozen earth, and clothe in *fresh attire*
 The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor spun.

The conclusion of Bampfylde's Christmas sonnet reminds us of Goldsmith's account of his travels. "Whenever," says he, "I approached a peasant's house towards nightfall, I played one of my merriest tunes, and that procured me not only a lodging but subsistence for the next day." The poet also alludes to this circumstance in his "Traveller."

"How often have I led thy sportive choir,
 With tuneless pipe, beside the murmuring Loire !
 * * * * *

And haply though my harsh touch faltering still
 But mocked all tune, and marred the dancer's skill ;
 Yet would the village praise my wondrous power
 And dance forgetful of the noontide hour."

It is pretty certain, we think, that Southey's praise of Bampfylde on the score of originality, is not well founded ; but at the same time it cannot be denied that the latter was a man of elegant taste and real genius, though he was a little too apt to echo the style and sentiment of greater poets. His history is a truly melancholy one. He was a man of high family and good expectations, but he soon ruined himself by his want of common prudence. He was one of those unhappy persons to whom great intellectual endowments prove a curse instead of a blessing, for he permitted his imagination and his passions to lead him into disgraceful excesses and overthrow the balance of his mind. He soon confirmed the sad truth of Dryden's axiom—

"Great wits to madness surely are allied."

He died we believe in 1796, having spent the last twenty years of his life in a private mad-house. Southey obtained from Jackson of Exeter a touching account of poor Bampfylde, which was published in 1831, by Sir Egerton Brydges, in the *Anglo-Genevan Journal*. We quote a passage of great interest :—

"He was the brother of Sir Charles, as you say, and you probably know that there is a disposition to insanity in the family. At the time when Jackson became intimate with him, he was just in his prime, and had no other wish than to live in solitude, and amuse himself with poetry and music. He lodged in a farm-house near Chudleigh, and would oftentimes come to Exeter in a winter morning ungloved and open-breasted, before Jackson was up, (though he was an early riser), with a pocket-full of music or poems, to know how he liked them. His relations thought this was a sad life for a man of family, and forced him to London ! The tears ran down Jackson's cheeks, when he told me the story,—'Poor fellow,' said he, there did not live a purer creature,—and, if

they would have let him alone, he might have been alive now.' When he was in London, his feelings, having been forced out of their natural and proper channel, took a wrong direction, and he soon began to suffer the punishment of debauchery. The Miss Palmer, to whom he dedicated his sonnets (afterwards and perhaps still Lady Inchiquin) was niece to Sir Joshua Reynolds. Whether Sir Joshua objected to his addresses on account of his irregularities in London, or of the family disposition to insanity, I know not : but this was the commencement of his madness. He was refused admittance into the house ; upon this, in a fit of half anger and half derangement, he broke the windows, and was (little to Sir Joshua's honour) sent to Newgate. Some weeks after this had happened, Jackson went to London, and one of his first enquiries was for Bampfylde. Lady B., his mother, said, she knew little or nothing about him,—that she had got him out of Newgate, and he was now in some beggarly place. 'Where?' 'In King's Street, Holborn,' she believed, 'but she did not know the number of the house.' Away went Jackson, and knocked at every door, till he found the right. It was a truly miserable place : the woman of the house was one of the worst class of women in London. She knew that Bampfylde had no money, and that at that time he had been three days without food. When Jackson saw him, there was all the levity of madness in his manners,—his shirt was ragged, and black as a coal-heaver's ; and his beard of a two months' growth. Jackson sent out for food, said, he was come to breakfast with him, and turned aside to a harpsichord in the room, literally, he said, to let him gorge himself without being noticed. He removed him from hence, and, after giving his mother a severe lecture, obtained for him a decent allowance ; and left him, when he himself quitted town, in decent lodgings, earnestly begging him to write.

"But he never wrote : 'The next news was, that he was in a private mad-house, and I never saw him more.' Almost the last time they met, he showed him several poems,—among others a *Ballad on the Murder of David Rizzio*—'such a ballad!' said he. He came that day to dine with Jackson, and was asked for copies. 'I burned them,' was the reply : 'I wrote them, to please you ; you did not seem to like them ; so I threw them in the fire.' After twenty years' confinement, he recovered his senses, but not till he was dying of a consumption. The apothecary urged him to leave Sloane Street, (where he had been always as kindly treated as he could be,) and go into his own country saying, that his friends in Devonshire would be very glad to see him. But he hid his face, and answered, 'No, sir ! they who knew me what I was, shall never see me what I am !'

Nothing in D'Israeli's "*Calamities of Authors*" is more pathetic than this little history.

SONNET—GRIEF.

IMPASSIONED grief is dumb—no sign or sound
 Can form its faithful language. Sorrow's dart
 In fevered breasts awakes an inward smart
 That friendship may not share. Oh ! curse profound,
 To bear each maddening passion darkly bound
 Within that fearful cell, the shrouded heart !
 The quivering lip, the quick convulsive start,
 But feebly tell the strife. The crowd around
 When sinks the strong man 'neath the sullen stream
 Thus see but bubbles rise,—these ill reveal
 The struggler's pangs ! When mourners pant and teem
 With secret thought, and voiceless anguish feel,
 The world's calm brow—the charms of nature seem
 To mock the smothered soul's unheard appeal !

LITERATURE AND MATHEMATICS.

A.—You are disposed to overrate the imaginative faculty and to do injustice to science. I believe you look upon William Shakespeare as a much greater man than Sir Isaac Newton, and this I hold to be an egregious error.

H.—I confess that I have not the same reverence for scientific genius that I have for literary or metaphysical genius. I think such men as Plato and Aristotle, exhibit a higher order of intellect than Newton's. Lord Bacon, too, was his superior. I believe I mentioned to you the other day that Walter Savage Landor places Bacon above all other philosophers in intellectual power, but below Shakespeare, making Shakespeare "the foremost man of all this world." Hallam, too, who is a cold and cautious judge, puts Shakespeare at the head not of English literature only, but of *all* literature.

A.—Literature has never effected half the practical good to mankind that science has.

H.—I doubt that greatly—but even if it were true, it is beside the question. We cannot measure the size of a man's intellect by the good which it has effected. Perhaps, Isaac Watt's doggerel hymns have done as much service to mankind as Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

A.—Then you seriously think that the severe reasonings and profound calculations of a Newton are of less value than the facile fancies of a poet?

H.—You do not put the case, fairly; I have not entered upon the question regarding the comparative value of poetry and science. I spoke of the degrees or kinds of intellect employed upon them. You seem to imply that the facility or labor of production has a bearing on the abstract value of poetry or science? This is a mistake. The question of ease or toil is of importance to the producer—not to those who benefit by his productions. The *rarity* of a thing may, indeed, enhance its value.

A scientific man inherits the experience and collected treasures of preceding times, and is urged on and assisted by his contemporaries in the same department of knowledge. He is seldom a very great way in advance of his own age, and is generally overtaken and left in the rear in the next. He is the creature of his own times and if you deduct from him all that he has received from others you make him poor indeed. Now the poet's merit is all his own—exclusively his own. It is perfectly individual and independent. Homer, though he lived so long ago, is still the greatest of poets, if

we except Shakespeare. A scientific work fifty years old is out of date. The works of Shakespeare after three centuries have lost nothing of their value.

A.—Well—I think it goes against you, that poetry exhibits no correspondent progress with the general advance of knowledge—that as far as poetry is concerned the ancient barbarian remains still equal or superior to his civilized descendants.

H.—The poetical faculty is a natural power comparatively little influenced by any system of education. Poetical power has been not only always rare, but has seemed so independent of external and accidental circumstances, that mankind, in all ages and countries, have regarded it as something mysterious and divine—as a species of inspiration—as a gift direct from Heaven.

A.—And yet it is in reality no more a gift from heaven than those other powers of the mind, which enable men to collect and digest the scientific knowledge that is floating about the world. I observe that you never overrate mere learning, but you are too apt to argue as if you thought that there was nothing excellent in life but poetry.

H.—Is not that a little too severe? You cannot mean it.

A.—At all events I often wish I could drive you from your books of poetry into the gay world, or into the open fields.

H.—As to the gay world—I leave it to others,—but of the open fields I am never tired, though latterly, I have been unfortunately so much of a stay-at-home. When I *do* go out, I enjoy the blue sky and the green meadows and the glittering streams quite as much as you do—perhaps more. At all events no man can echo with greater delight than I do the noble sentiment of Thomson :—

I care not Fortune what you me deny,
You cannot bar me of free Nature's grace,
You cannot shut the windows of the sky
Through which Aurora shows her brightening face ;
You cannot bar my constant feet to trace
The woods, the lawns, the living streams at eve.

But to return to our subject :—I saw some very good remarks the other day in *Blackwood's Magazine* on the nature of imagination. A man, says the writer, (either Wilson or Lockhart, I suppose) may have high intellect, with little or no imagination, but he cannot have a high imagination with little or no intellect. The intellect of Dante, Milton, and Shakespeare was higher, he thinks, than that of Aristotle, Newton, and Bacon.

A.—Both Wilson and Lockhart are poets ; and poets have always been disposed to overrate the value of the faculties required for the production of excellence in their favorite

art. Such partiality is a very natural weakness. You talk as if only great poets and artists were largely gifted with high imagination. But all great inventions and discoveries are first *suggested* by the imaginative faculty and completed by deep thought and study.

H.—I am glad to find you take this turn; because scientific men in general speak with great contempt of the imagination, and do not acknowledge the utility of the divinest of our faculties. But you go almost as far as Wordsworth, who says that poetry is the breath and finer spirit of *all* knowledge. By the way did you ever remark how much poetry there is in Lord Bacon's Essays! His thoughts often *involuntarily* move harmonious numbers. As the book is at hand, let me call your attention to a passage in the Essay on Gardens:—

"For the heath, which was the third part of our plot, I wish it to be framed as much as may be to a natural wildness. Trees I would have none in it, but some thickets made only of sweet-briar and honey-suckle, and some wild vine amongst; and the ground set with violets, strawberries, and primroses; for these are sweet and prosper in the shade."

Now observe how naturally this passage takes the form of blank-verse :—

For the heath, which was the third part of our plot,

———— I wish it to be framed

As much as may be to a natural wildness.

'Trees I'd have none in it, but some thickets made

Only of sweet-briar and honey-suckle,

And some wild vine amongst ; and the ground set

With violets, strawberries and primroses :

For these are sweet and prosper in the shade.

How poetical is the remark in the same Essay that "the breath of flowers is far sweeter in the air than in the hand *where it comes and goes like the warbling of music !*"

4.—Yes—there is poetry in Lord Bacon's prose ; but if there were not something besides and better, he would not rank quite so highly amongst the benefactors of mankind.

H.—You would not say so, if you had a due sense of the real claims of poetry, and had not been in the habit of regarding it as nothing more than an elegant accomplishment. "Newton is a great man," said Coleridge, "but excuse me if I think it would take many Newtons to make a Milton."

4.—This sort of arithmetical criticism applied to intellectual qualities of totally different natures is supremely absurd and unjust. He might as well have said it would take many turnips to make a tulip. And why thus multiply your poetical authorities? On matters of science they have not the weight of a straw, except with poets themselves.

H.—There is an excellent article in the *Edinburgh Review* on the subject of mathematics, in which the writer produces a host of high authorities against the study of

them as a mental exercise. He brings forward some of the most eminent mathematicians as witnesses against their own sciences. He shows that even mathematicians themselves have felt that too close a study of mathematics contracts and freezes the intellect.

A.—Oh, nothing is easier than to collect the opinions of celebrated men for or against any branch of human learning. From Solomon, who tells us that all is vanity and vexation of spirit, down to our own days, there is, perhaps, no eminent personage to be found who has not, at some time or other, under the weariness of labour or disappointment, expressed his disgust at his own peculiar occupation.

H.—Pascal, a profound genius and an eminent mathematician, was amongst those who have avowed their contempt for mathematics.

A.—Pascal died a devotee at thirty-nine, and expressed his contempt for *all* human learning, and abandoned *all* studies, as he himself says, in order to apply himself solely to what our Saviour calls, the one thing needful.

H.—You observe that it is easy to collect authorities for or against any branch of human knowledge. This is true with respect to the opinions of men on those arts and sciences in which they have not themselves excelled; but it would give you some little trouble, I suspect, to show that eminent historians, philosophers, poets, painters, and musicians have spoken with that unqualified contempt of the subject of their studies with which eminent mathematicians have spoken of their own sciences.

A.—You are much too fond of settling all questions by the authority of great names. The American Franklin tells us that Plato has somewhere said that any one who does not understand the 117th proposition of the 13th Book of Euclid, ought not to be ranked amongst rational creatures. If the authority of a great name were a great argument, this ought to settle our dispute. I do not attribute so much importance as you do to the decision of individuals, however eminent, respecting *any* particular branch of knowledge. *All* true knowledge is more or less valuable, and perhaps nothing would be more easy than to prove that of all knowledge mathematical knowledge is the most practically useful.

H.—How can you talk in this, extravagant way? Why, a knowledge of mathematics is of so little use in daily life that you may know a man intimately for half a century without discovering whether he has mastered the first proposition in Euclid. Men in general do not talk about equations and curves. But ignorance in the elements of a literary education cannot be concealed for a day—not for an hour—

not, indeed, for five minutes, if the ignoramus will only attempt to speak or write. Are there not hundreds of ladies and of gentlemen, too, (some of them eminent authors—teachers of mankind) whose conversation is in the highest degree elegant, instructive, and delightful, who know *absolutely nothing* of the first elements of mathematics? * Bayle, says D'Israeli, knew nothing of Geometry, and, as LeClerc informs us, acknowledged that he could not comprehend the first problem in Euclid—and yet what a subtle reasoner he was! What would be the mental character of that man or woman who should know *absolutely nothing* of the first elements of literature? Could he or she be otherwise than coarse and vulgar? Which student would have the best chance of acquiring a refinement and elevation of soul—he who should confine himself to literature or he who should confine himself to mathematics? Pope in his *Dunciad* has a couplet against mathematics.

Full in the midst of Euclid dip at once,
And petrify a genius to a dunce.

Do you think that the name of Shakespeare or Milton could be put in the place of Euclid, in this couplet, without turning the meaning into downright nonsense?

A.—I am sick of your poetical authorities. I laugh at your poets who laugh at mathematics; they talk as if the great business of life was to write and read verses, and they affect a superiority over every art or science that happens to be beyond their comprehension.

H.—Beyond their comprehension! Dugald Stewart was no poet, and yet you must remember his remark—"How small is the number of individuals who are qualified to think justly on metaphysical, moral, or political subjects, in comparison with those, who may be trained by practice to follow the longest processes of mathematical reasoning." It is notorious that little boys at school, and very dull ones, too, often acquire, in a wonderfully short time, a marvellous amount of mathematical knowledge. There was "*a calculating boy*," exhibited in London some years ago, who was almost an idiot, but who exhibited an amazing aptitude for the most difficult mathematical calculations. Idiotic boys do not shine in literature. The *Journal of Education* (for October 1832) quotes from a Sicilian Journal an account of three mathematical children. One of them, who was only seven years old, gave off-hand answers to problems which usually

* When Steele said of a lady, that *to have loved her was a liberal education*, we are sure that, if she had any knowledge of Euclid, which is very doubtful, it was not of *that* accomplishment he was thinking.

require tedious arithmetical calculations. He would listen to a question and give his solution while pursuing his pastimes. Montaigne, in one of his Essays, tells us that the "Tunny-fish is well acquainted with mathematics." I have known many human mathematicians who seemed to be very little elevated above the Tunny-fish. A man's wisdom, or utility, or moral worth depends very little upon the propositions in Euclid.

A.—You might add with equal truth that they depend as little on *as in presenti* or *propria quæ maribus*.

H.—Well, then, let me have an explanation of the utility of the science of mathematics.

A.—It builds our houses and our bridges ; fortifies them and defends them when fortified—constructs our ships and takes them safely across the pathless ocean—frames every kind of machinery, from the watch, which is our constant guide and companion, to the steam-engine, which is uniting the opposite ends of the earth in an intercourse more intimate than neighbouring nations ever enjoyed without it. It gives us the most delicate fabrics of clothing, as well as the most substantial ; aids our decaying sight, and enters into every branch of human industry, teaching us how to apply the rude materials of nature to the greatest advantage. If we leave the practical and turn to the regions of speculation, how vastly the human mind is enlarged by the sublime contemplation of astronomy ! Is there any thing "*cold, rigid, and one-sided*" (for such terms have been applied to the study of mathematics by some of your authorities) in speculations which embrace infinity and almost eternity—in studies which enable us to contemplate this vast and magnificent creation, not with ignorant wonder, but with an admiration increasing in exact proportion to our knowledge ? If such studies will not enlarge the mind, what will ? Do they not lead to a reverence for the great Creator, whose mercies are over all his works ? Let me add, that the science of mathematics is the only branch of human knowledge which is strictly and literally of *universal* application.

H.—Bravo ! You have done eloquent justice to your subject, and proved yourself a foeman worthy of one's steel. It is a pity, however, that you did not omit your *addition*. It would take greater genius than either yours or mine to give mathematics an *universal* application. The mathematical sciences relate to number, quantity, space, form and time—but how they can relate to *everything else*, I really cannot understand. Can they measure sentiment ? Can they calculate moral probabilities ? Can they decide questions of taste and feeling ? A certain mathematician exhibited nothing but his

own ignorance when he thought that he had shown the worthlessness of Milton's *Paradise Lost* by asking what it *proved*. The movements of the human heart, and the whole spiritual world are beyond the reach of measurement and calculation. If the mathematician be resolved to apply his science to daily life he must not attempt to meddle with its social relations and moral reasonings, but with things purely physical.

For he by geometric scale
Could take the size of pots of ale ;
Resolve, by sines and tangents, strait,
If bread or butter wanted weight,
And wisely tell what hour o' the day
The clock does strike, by algebra.

A.—You have made the remark that the rarity of a thing may enhance its value. Well—are there many Newtons?

H.—No. Are there many Homers? But very great distinction is far more easily acquired in science than in poetry. In some respects attainments in science are analogous to mere learning, and mere learning never ranked very high in the estimation of mankind. Of the comparatively small intellectual power required for all attainments in science, I think you may form a pretty fair notion, from the facility with which a hundred school-boys can be urged on to mathematical triumphs in almost an incredibly short space of time, and the tedious slowness and great inequality of the same boys in general literature. In one year how great an advance may be made in mathematics by boys of industry and zeal, and a habit of close attention! Aristotle has noticed the facility with which children may become good geometers. But the progress in literature is slow and toilsome, because, to comprehend the delicate embodiments of moral and metaphysical truth, and acquire a correct taste, demands certain qualities which are beyond even the mature understanding of ordinary men, and the mind of a young student, however highly gifted by nature, must considerably expand before he can thoroughly appreciate literary excellence. The higher faculties of the mind are of slow growth, however sedulously cultivated; but the capacity to measure and calculate comes early and rapidly improves. I prefer all ethical or metaphysical thought and speculation to the exact sciences. I think the ethical or metaphysical philosopher draws his materials more directly from his own heart and brain than the natural or scientific philosopher, and that he exhibits a higher order of intellect and a wider range of meditation. The heart and mind of man are by far the most interesting and important objects in the universe, and it is with these that the metaphysician and the moralist are conversant. One hu-

man soul is worth all the matter in the world, and affords a profounder and more delightful study than any thing relating to mere form and quantity.

A.—I suspect you would find it very difficult to prove that Newton's mind was a mere recipient. He was as great a discoverer in science as Columbus was of lands.

H.—He made discoveries, it is true, but he was in the company of hundreds of fellow-laborers. They were all on the same road, and he was only an additional step or two in advance of the advancing crowd. He was assisted by the spirit and experience of the age. If Newton had not discovered the law of gravitation it would inevitably have been discovered by some other man, perhaps, greatly his inferior, and certainly America would not have remained unknown to this day had Columbus never existed.* It is said that Kepler had fully conceived the law of gravitation† and anticipated the theory of prismatic colors. Many foreign writers attribute to Leibnitz several of the discoveries which we attribute exclusively to Newton.‡ Galileo's supposed discovery or invention of the telescope seems to have been only an improvement upon another man's idea. The inventors of printing and gunpowder are unknown. Sir Humphrey Davy, it is said, when near his end, expressed his regret that he was leaving the world when it was "so near

* Seneca, the tragedian, hath these verses :—

"——— Venient annis
Sæcula seris, quibus Oceanus
Vincula rerum laxet, et ingens.
Patcat Tellur, Tiphysque novos
Detegat orbes ; nec sit terris
Ultima Thule."

A prophecy of the discovery of America.—*Lord Bacon's Essay on Prophecies.*

† There is not a more glorious achievement of scientific genius upon record, than Kepler's guesses, prophecies, and ultimate apprehension of the law of the mean distances of the planets as connected with the period of their revolutions round the sun. *Gravitation, too, he had fully conceived* ; but because it seemed inconsistent with some received observations on light, he gave it up, in allegiance, as he says, to nature. Yet the idea vexed and haunted his mind ; "*vexat me et lacesat*" are his words, I believe.—*Coleridge.*

‡ The *Bombay Times* learns that the chair of Natural Philosophy in the University of St. Andrew's has been offered to Mr. Adams of Cambridge, whom our readers will recognize as the discoverer of the planet Neptune, although, unfortunately for the credit of English science, he did not make the discovery until the existence of the planet was discovered and proclaimed by Le Verrier. Such an honor as this does not often fall to an undergraduate, although it can hardly counterbalance the chagrin of the young *savant* at having been anticipated in the publication of the discovery.—*Bengal Hurkaru, June 9, 1847.*

Hallam tells us that "the discoveries which made Galileo, and Kepler, and Moestlin and Maurolycus and Castelli, and other names illustrious, the system of Copernicus, the very theories of recent Geologists, are anticipated by Da Vinci (the painter) within the compass of a few pages, not, perhaps, in the most precise language or on the most conclusive reasoning, but so as to strike us with something like an awe of preternatural knowledge."

To this day it is a question whether it was Newton or Leibnitz who invented the differential calculus.

the brink of three great discoveries." He had no apprehension that there would be a want of men to make them. I wish a dying poet could calculate with the same certainty on new plays like those of Shakespeare, or new Epics like those of Milton.

A.—Luckily the world can go on much more easily without verses than without the sciences. But even putting out of view the practical utility of mathematics in our daily life, remember how the study of this science sharpens and braces the reasoning powers.

H.—Only in one direction.* Mathematicians are like helpless children beyond the pale of their own science. They cannot walk steadily out of their own go-cart. Beyond their diagrams they are often the dumbest or silliest of mankind. Napoleon said of Laplace that as a public man he could do nothing with him, that he was quite useless—that his mind was full of his *infinite littles*. Even in matters relating to their favorite science, mathematicians are often strangely fantastical. Kepler expressed his belief that the solid globe of earth is an enormous animal, and that the tides are produced by the spouting out of water through its gills—a pretty specimen of mathematical reasoning! Mathematicians have too often neither common sense nor rare sense. When required to exercise their judgment on moral evidence, they are often either ludicrously credulous or most unreasonably sceptical. Even Newton himself sometimes spoke and wrote in a strain that made his friends doubt his sanity. He had "a hankering after the French Prophets" and was "possessed with the old fooleries of astrology," and was "so far gone in chemistry as to be upon the hunt after the philosopher's stone." Coleridge observes that "Newton's lucubrations on Daniel and the Revelations are little less than downright raving."

A.—Did not the poet Goldsmith "talk like poor Poll?"

H.—Yes—but "he wrote like an angel," and on a wide range of subjects.

A.—And was not "the great moralist," the "leviathan of literature," Dr. Johnson, childishly superstitious? And were

* I find that this is a logic which has no concern with the conduct of life, with morals, law, politics, with any thing in short of all that which forms the great mass of human action and human reasoning. I have, indeed, lived to find that the logic of triangles is the logic of triangles and nothing more; that moral magnitudes cannot be measured or compared by mathematical rules, and that where nothing is definite, nothing rigidly proportional, nothing positive, and where a thousand jarring quantities are concerned in one question, it is in vain to expect aid from the rigidity of mathematical laws, or the accuracy of mathematical investigation. The human soul is assuredly not a triangle.—*Reveries of a Cantab.*

not his speculations on the principle of the arch "little better than downright raving?"

H.—I, on my side, am not so extravagant as to contend that moral, metaphysical or political reasoning, will apply to mathematical subjects—you, on your side, contend that mathematical reasoning may be applied to moral, metaphysical or political subjects. You confound very opposite things. If a literary man fall into gross errors in speculating upon mathematical subjects what does it prove? Not that he is a stupid person generally, but that he is ignorant of a particular branch of knowledge. Notwithstanding those mistakes, he may be a man of the very highest intellect. But if a writer treat absurdly a subject which is not purely technical or professional—a subject for which good sense and sober judgment or originality of mind, rather than peculiar information, is required to enable him to handle it satisfactorily, the world is justified in "writing him down an ass."

A.—Even allowing your argument to embody a general truth, I deny its applicability in the slightest degree to any really eminent mathematician. I have never read Newton's work on the Prophecies. It may be better or worse for aught I know, than a work of a similar nature by his name-sake; but this is certain, that in the interpretation of prophecies, very acute writers—not mathematicians only—have greatly differed, and it is not fair to form any conclusion against a man's general powers of intellect, because his interpretation of a mysterious passage of Scripture is different from our own. Newton's was the mightiest of human minds. Your objections only tend to show that it was not perfect. Perhaps there is no instance in the history of genius of powers so gigantic associated with such unaffected modesty. We cannot too often call to mind his exquisitely beautiful declaration, made at the close of his useful life, of the little he had done. "I do not know," said he, "what I may seem to the world, but, as to myself, I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore and diverting myself in now and then finding a smother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."

H.—Is it possible that Newton had that passage of Milton in his mind, concluding with the line

As children gathering pebbles on the shore?

L.—I think not. Let me now ask whether the exact sciences are not of more importance than the art of composition?

H.—The art of composition, the art of embodying well chosen thoughts in well chosen words cannot be overrated

It is by words alone that the mighty dead yet live and yet instruct us. It was by the use of words alone that they were able to leave behind them a legacy to the whole human race incalculably more precious than any other earthly good. Thoughts unexpressed, imprisoned in a solitary brain, are short-lived and limited in their utility. Thoughts unembodied in words are ghost-like and impalpable, and haunt but one human brain. The thoughts of the dumb are smothered in their dark and silent cradles. The soul lives best without the body, but thoughts cannot long exist unless clothed in words.

How curious it is that a true poet or an eloquent speaker should be able to seize, with electrical rapidity, on the exact word which he requires!—that out of a hundred thousand words he should bring forth instantaneously the very one which alone suits his purpose. It is a wonderful and mysterious process of the mind! In what part of the brain are all these beautiful instruments of thought, stored up for use as in a vast armoury? In what form or order are they disposed in that small ivory-walled citadel of the soul, the human head, that the commander of the place can, in a moment, lay his hand upon each as it is required, without hesitation or confusion? It may happen that the word in requisition has been lying silent and concealed in some dim corner of the memory, or what we please to phrase it, for half a century, and yet present itself as a word of yesterday at our sudden need. What an army of mysterious shapes are crowded together on the small field of the brain, without pressure or confusion! At the bidding of the soul, how the thoughts rush out of their secret cells into the light of day, assume palpable and enduring forms, and become citizens of the world! No longer the exclusive property of the individual who brought them into existence, they visit the brains of millions of men, generation after generation. They 'wander through eternity.'

It is an exquisite encouragement to the toiling heart of genius to remember that books are immortal! They live on earth when their makers are in heaven. The great author has a double life. He exists in two spheres. Homer is beyond the stars, and here he is too in our snug and silent study. The moon with her calm, pallid, pensive countenance of light—the all cheering sun—the blue hills—the green vallies—the long winding rivers, that were gazed upon by Homer more than two thousand years ago, we gaze on now—and we repeat the same magical words that fell from his inspired lips and stirred the hearts of his contemporaries. The mortal frame of the divine Homer was as perishable as a tree or flower, but his spirit, and the printed form in which so large

a portion of that spirit is now enshrined, will live for ever. The poetical part of his nature has passed into a tangible form—the property of the world—a legacy, bequeathed not to individuals of wealth or power only, but to all mankind. It is more precious than gold and more durable than granite.

Literature is a radiant palace, in which all men are welcome guests. Our hosts are the greatest spirits that have worn mortal clothing. Homer and Chaucer, and Dante and Spenser, and Shakespeare, and Bacon, and Milton, a glorious company, stand at the portico and bid us enter. Men of all creeds and colors and conditions may boldly accept the invitation.

L.—Your mind is one-sided. Your education has taught you the beauty of the purely moral and intellectual world, but it has not taught you how to set a proper value on things practical and useful.

H.—What are all physical and mechanical things—all measurements and calculations—compared with the movements of the immortal mind?

The proper study of mankind is man.

A.—You really talk as if men were all soul and nothing else—as if the discovery of the mariner's compass were less valuable than the discovery of a manuscript that would settle a dispute respecting a new reading of a passage in Shakespeare.

H.—I cannot measure intellectual power by the test of mere utility in the narrow sense of the term. Food is more immediately necessary than thought; yet speaking generally and without reference to an individual man in a state of starvation, a new thought is worth more than a new loaf of bread. But, because the effect of the thought is not so palpable and well defined, narrow and vulgar reasoners always think the loaf of bread the more *useful* article. I am vexed that Macaulay, in his otherwise magnificent essay on Lord Bacon, should have made an attempt to elevate the philosophy of physics above the philosophy of mind. If he were forced, he says, to make his choice between Seneca and the first shoemaker, he should pronounce for the tradesman in preference to the philosopher, because the moral maxims of the one are less useful than the shoes of the other. A school-boy would deserve to be whipped for so silly a paradox, if he were not misled by the Mills and Bentham of the age. If men had feet only and no brains, a stout pair of shoes would be more useful than the Bible. But man is a compound being and possesses a soul as well as a body. We deeply feel the necessity of those nobler arts that

Raise us from the mire
And liberate our hearts from low pursuits
By gross *utilities* enslaved.

A.—Why, I always thought Macaulay an anti-utilitarian.

H.—So did I—perhaps he likes to show his ingenuity occasionally by arguing on the wrong side. In this spirit he asserted, in his essay on Milton, that the mind of a true poet must necessarily be unsound, and on the question of Copyright argued against the claims of literary men to a property in the result of their own labors. I am afraid he will fairly go over to the party of Bentham one of these days. What is his attack on Plato but an indirect compliment to Bentham? He is in reality upholding the one-sided doctrine of *utility*, which, according to Bentham, applies only to things that can be handled, measured, and counted. With the utilitarians man seems to be all body—every thing which relates to spirit they appear to think a matter of moonshine—the stuff of which dreams are made—the visions of idle poets. “There is no absolute *utility* in poetry,” said Sir Humphrey Davy, “but it gives pleasure, and refines and exalts the mind.” This is utilitarianism. To please the mind—to refine and exalt it—is *useless*!

A.—Let us not go much further just now into the interminable subject of utilitarianism. You are apt to run wild upon it.

H.—I confess that I sometimes lose my temper when I find men who ought to know better, elevating things local, physical, and temporal above things universal, spiritual, and eternal. An individual baker or cobbler may contribute to the ease and comfort of the craving stomachs or tender toes of a little circle for a little time—or, perhaps, even of a whole village for half a century. But an individual poet or philosopher by new images of intellectual beauty or sublime moral truths eloquently enforced, may gratify and elevate and strengthen the souls of countless millions for an indefinite number of ages. Beautiful images and glorious truths do not disappear quite so rapidly as wheaten loaves, nor wear away like shoes. It is true that the influence of authors of original genius on the minds of nations cannot be so exactly defined as that of the baker or the cobbler on the bodies of their customers, but few could have expected that a writer of Macaulay’s sagacity and breadth of mind would fall into the pitifully vulgar error of questioning the utility of every thing that will not admit of being weighed, or counted, or measured, and even doubting the importance or the reality of moral power over the minds of men. According to him, Socrates and Plato were eloquent babblers of “fruitless wisdom.” “Words and more words and nothing but words,” he says, “had been all the fruit of all the toil of all the most renowned sages of sixty generations.” As if the

words of these sages had not moulded the minds of generations and contributed to the refinement and elevation of our nature.

I would not be understood to underrate the mechanical sciences or the arts of life,—all knowledge according to its kind and degree is more or less valuable, and in a system of education different studies are necessary to balance the faculties of the mind, and to give each fair play. But to those who would depreciate the more spiritual arts, it is as well to put the question of whether it is always quite clear that the sciences which lessen human labor, or add to our sensual luxuries, contribute materially or permanently to the real happiness of mankind. Happiness and its opposite are qualities or conditions more dependent on our inner nature than on external things.

The mind is its own place, and of itself
Can make a heaven of earth, a hell of heaven.

The pleasures which all mechanical contrivances can communicate are speedily exhausted. We soon get accustomed to physical advantages : their charm dies with their novelty. We then cease to regard them as an addition to our stock. We might feel, indeed, their loss (for a time), but we little value their possession. Those high arts on the other hand, which are addressed to our moral and intellectual nature, which kindle the imagination and touch the heart, which elevate and refine the soul, which teach us how to think and feel, are immediately conversant with all the elements of pure and permanent enjoyment. In the intellectual banquet there is no surfeit—the appetite grows with what it feeds on. The longer we dwell on sublime truths and glorious images and noble sentiments—the longer we gaze on the face of nature and commune with its mysterious beauty—the longer we watch, in a loving spirit, the indications of a higher nature in the finest specimens of humanity—the longer we contemplate the works of God—the more capable do we become of that spiritual delight which lifts us into the atmosphere of religion and renders us comparatively independent of all grosser cares.

How frequently it happens that things which to the mere utilitarian seem most trivial and transitory, are peculiarly valuable and permanent ! He speaks with contempt of the beauty of style in composition, and calls words air—"a trim reckoning !" He thinks stone walls alone are built for eternity. But as Byron said, after Mirabeau, *true words are things* : and as Hazlitt said, they are *the only things that last for ever*. Printed words, emblems of true thoughts, can never die. It is not pretended that all words are equally last-

ing. God forbid that they should be so. The sayings of idiots and dunces must die. Foolish and unmeaning words are fortunately as ephemeral as the dust-like insects that glitter in the sunshine. Those words only are immortal that have the rare bloom of genius on them and that embody truth. With the utmost respect for Macaulay's brilliant abilities, I shall yet continue to think that Socrates and Plato were more useful members of the great family of man than the best shoe-makers in the world. I shall even dare to assert that they have contributed more to the moral elevation of their fellow-creatures than all the Mills and Bentham's of the nineteenth century.

L.—I can hardly believe that Macaulay means what he says—he cannot be serious. Nor can *you* be serious, I think, in speaking so slightly of science.

H.—No! You must not go away with the idea that I deny in sober earnestness the utility of the mathematical or any other sciences. I am not quite so narrow minded. Perhaps if we thoroughly understood each other, we should find that we differ less than we appear to do. Men in the heat of argument are apt to overstate their case, to run into extremes, and to try to get as far as possible from each other. I would simply protest against the contemptuous treatment of poetry and literature and the fine arts, in which men of science are too apt to indulge themselves. They provoke me to retorts perhaps too often characterized by that very extravagance and flippancy which I attribute to them. If I have ever said too much in favour of poetry, it is because they have said too much against it.

SONNET—TO POESY.

FAIR Ruler of the visionary hour !
 Sweet idol of the passionate and wild !
 Enchantress of the soul ! Lo ! Sorrow's child
 Still haunts thy shrine, and invokes thy power !
 Alas ! when Fortune and the false world lower,
 Shall thy sad votary supplicate in vain !
 Wilt thou, too, scorn affliction's withered bower,
 Nor lend thine ear to misery and pain ?
 Spirit unkind ! And yet thy charms controul
 My fervent aspirations—worthless still,—
 And fitful visions, all undreamt at will,
 With ungrasped glory mock my cheated soul !
 Like beauteous forms of hope, that glimmer nigh,
 But from Despair's approach for ever fly !

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT is the most popular poet in the United States, and holds about the same station in the poetical literature of America that Washington Irving does in its prose literature. His diction is chaste and musical, his descriptions singularly fresh and true, and his thoughts, images, and feelings, are natural, delicate, and gentle. It is true that there are poets of greater power even in his own country; but Bryant has no rival there in point of elegance. Dana and Longfellow have both of them more vigor, but less harmony and grace and tenderness. Bryant's earliest productions were his best. The latest volume of his that has reached us is entitled *The Fountain and other Poems*. It is a pity that he ever published it, for it is greatly inferior to his former works. The poems in this little collection have comparatively little of the freshness and beauty of those productions of his earlier years which gained him a reputation both in America and in England. These have not "the morn and liquid dew of youth" upon them. They are labored more earnestly but less happily than his former works. The author seems to have written them "by compulsion;" as if he had been teased to write verses by importunate editors of periodicals and fair owners of drawing-room albums; or because he thought it necessary to keep himself before the public; not because he had feelings which could not be repressed without pain, and a passionate longing to embody truth and beauty and to make other hearts throb in unison with his own.

What a pity it is that poets should ever listen to any other call than that of the Muse herself! Many people senselessly expect a poet to write a poem to order as readily as a carpenter would make a table. A carpenter is always a carpenter and can undertake to make to-morrow as good a table as he has made to-day. But a poet is not always a poet. He cannot be certain that in the course of thirty years he shall be able to write thirty lines as good as the fortunate production of some bygone hour. No one, says the Latin proverb, is wise at all hours, still more certain is it that, no poet is poetical at all hours. The merit of a poem can never be estimated by the time and labor devoted to it. The poet cannot command his own genius. It is not to be ordered or trammelled. It is as free as love itself.

Love free as air at sight of human ties
Spreads his light wings and in a moment flies.

William Cullen Bryant was born at Cumberland in Massa-

chusetts, in 1794. His father was a physician. Johnson tells us that Pope used to show his juvenile verses to his father and that the old man would encourage him with the remark—"These be good rhymes." Bryant seems to have been equally fortunate in obtaining paternal favor for the first offspring of his muse. He began to write so early and at the same time with such maturity of taste and power that to satisfy the sceptical public to whom his verses had been announced as the productions of a boy of thirteen, his friends were obliged to produce satisfactory evidence of his age. We do not quite agree with his enthusiastic biographer who seems to look upon Bryant's boyish performances as equal to the precocities of Tasso, and Cowley, and Pope, and Chatterton; but they are nevertheless very remarkable indications of early genius. His *Thanatopsis* written in his nineteenth year, is a fine specimen of early thoughtfulness and sensibility. It is most meditative; most musical. It is strange that a mere boy in the first flush of life, should have had such a strong sense of his mortality as he has given expression to in this beautiful poem.

Bryant finished his education at one of the best American Colleges where he greatly distinguished himself in his literary exercises. On leaving College, he studied the law, and was admitted to the bar in 1815. He mixed literary pursuits with his legal occupations and edited for some time the *New York Monthly Review*. Whether, like Talfourd, he proved himself to be as successful as a lawyer as he was as a poet, the biographer does not inform us. Bryant is now editor of the *New York Evening Post*. The American papers are so numerous and are sold at such a remarkably low price that we should hardly think an Editor's profits there, could be equal to a lawyer's income in good practice; but yet Bryant seems to have given up his briefs for the sake of his newspaper. Probably his name and popularity give a very extensive circulation to the *Evening Post* and make it a better property than the generality of American newspapers.

His American biographer tells us that Bryant's poem of *The Ages* is the only one that he has written in the stanza of Spenser. This we believe: but when he adds that its versification is equal to that of "the best passages of the *Faerie Queene* and *Childe Harold*," we beg leave to contradict him very decidedly. We admire the character of Bryant and like to see him praised—*judiciously*—but not in this style. For

Praise undeserved is censure in disguise.

Then, again, the same extravagant critic speaks of "the *vigor and compactness*" of Bryant's diction, which "prove

him a master of his art." The cobbler should stick to his last. This man was never meant to be a critic. He wishes very earnestly to praise as much as possible, but unhappily he does not know how to praise in the right place. It is just like one of the London critics' raptures about "the concentrated strength of William Wordsworth." Neither Wordsworth nor Bryant are strong writers. Wordsworth is thoughtful, imaginative, philosophical; but he is anything but vigorous. His characteristic defect is *diffuseness*. Bryant is elegant, pensive, correct, highly finished, pathetic and descriptive; but never energetic; never *vigorous and compact*. But yet take him altogether, we prefer him to any other American Poet. Here is a sweet little poem of his, something in the manner of Mrs. Hemans;—

TO A WATERFOWL.

Whither, 'midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly painted on the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean's side?

There is a power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast,—
The desert and illimitable air,—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fann'd;
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,
And scream among thy fellows: reeds shall bend,
Soon, o'er thy shelter'd nest.

Thou'rt gone; the abyss of heaven
Hath swallow'd up thy form; yet, on my heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

MISCELLANEA.*

COBBETT AND HAZLITT.—No man grapples with his enemy or with a particular question, with such a close and mortal vehemence as Cobbett ; but in large and liberal views he is greatly surpassed, not only by Hazlitt, but by many other writers on the same side in politics.† He never troubles himself with the abstract philosophy of politics, but applies himself to a direct and practical consideration of some immediate object. In doing this he addresses himself so entirely to the common sense of mankind, with such an air of downright sincerity, and in a style so colloquial, clear, forcible and unaffected, that he is sure to command the attention of his readers. It is rarely, indeed, that he is opposed to the stream of popular opinion, and the people are delighted to find their favorite notions explained and defended in their own unsophisticated way, but with a voice of greater power. In this lies the secret of Cobbett's extraordinary success. He enforces and confirms all the national prejudices of his countrymen. His words come home at once to their business and bosoms. His capacity does not differ from that of ordinary people in kind, but in degree. It is of the same character, but of greater force ; it is a concentration of the popular mind. Hazlitt, on the other hand, with less rude vigour and bulldog ferocity, displays a wider range of thought and a more subtle logic. As the majority of men are not metaphysicians and profound thinkers, the effect of Hazlitt's writings is less palpable and immediate than that of Cobbett's. They exercise, however, a deeper influence over superior minds, and are calculated to make a more lasting impression. The *Essays* of William Hazlitt will be recurred to for instruction and entertainment when the *Political Register* is forgotten ; because the former teem with general truths and first principles, while the latter owes its attraction to party prejudices and temporary details. Cobbett has none of those sentences pregnant with thought and felicitous in expression which linger on the reader's memory, and at last form a portion of his own mind. As a partisan, however, Cobbett is, perhaps, more effective than Hazlitt, because the latter is apt to lose sight of some immediate interest or narrow controversy, and to

* The dialogue on *Literature and Mathematics* (ending on page 657) and most of the following miscellaneous fragments, are taken from a series of dialogues in a book of mine, entitled *Literary Chit-Chat*, published by Messrs. W. Rozario and Company, Calcutta, in 1848.

† This article was written in the life-time of these authors.

run off into speculations too deep or delicate for the comprehension of the multitude.

But though Cobbett is not a profound writer, it is impossible to read his productions, let the subject be what it may, without being struck with the force and perspicuity of the style. There is no dainty choice of uncommon phrases, no squeamish avoidance of natural images and naked truths, but a manly simplicity that has often a far greater effect than is attained by the finest rhetorical periods of more fastidious writers. His English is not only more racy, but more correct than that of Swift himself; and all his compositions display the native vigour of our language to the greatest possible advantage. To suppose that his style is a vulgar style, is a great error. That he is guilty of occasional vulgarisms of thought and that his mode of treating an opponent is sometimes unmannerly, cannot be denied; but in speaking of his style I confine myself to the composition alone. Let a reader of discrimination compare a number of the *Register* (kept up with such extraordinary spirit for nearly thirty years) with the "sound and fury, signifying nothing," of a paper in the *Rambler*. Cobbett's intellect, though close and masculine, is not of a very high order. In this respect he cannot be compared for a moment either with Dr. Johnson* or with Swift. He has neither depth nor elevation. But though his mind is neither profound nor imaginative; though he can neither dive nor soar; he walks with unrivalled ease and strength on the plain ground of common sense. He is never dull, and never feeble; and young ambitious writers, who are apt to aim at stirring the minds of their readers with gaudy epithets and laboriously rounded sentences, should have their attention called to the powerful effect which Cobbett produces by the simplest means. When a writer seems himself perplexed, and is observed to labour, the reader always partakes largely of his pain and weariness. There are no qualities of good writing so well fitted to keep up the reader's attention, as an unaffected perspicuity and an easy vigour. He who doubts this, should take up a number of Cobbett's *Register*, when his eyes are just closing over some laboured composition, in which every sentence has received its highest polish, and he will feel like a man who leaves his lamp-lit study for the fresh morning air.

WARBURTON'S CRITICISM.—H.—"Hurd cried up Warburton's preposterous notes on Shakspeare," says Horace Walpole,

* Dr. Johnson's intellectual powers must not be judged of by his *Rambler*.

"which would have died of their own folly, though Mr. Edwards* had not put them to death with the keenest wit in the world." Warburton's notes on Pope are just as bad. It is strange that Pope should have fallen into the indiscretion of bequeathing his works to the care of an editor so utterly devoid of taste in matters poetical as this very learned but very vulgar and bullying Bishop, who passes over the real beauties of his author to point out the merit of such a passage as this.—

Avidien, or his wife (no matter which
For him you'll call a dog, and her a ———)
Sell their presented partridges, and fruits,
And humbly live on rabbits and on roots.

"Our Poet," saith the learned commentator with reference to these four lines, "had the art of giving wit and dignity to his Billingsgate." Warton gravely adds, "I see neither wit nor dignity in these names." No—nor did any other reader in all England.

A.—You should never quote that affected coxcomb, that effeminate gossip, Horace Walpole, on a question of literature. In a letter of his to a French lawyer he says, "all that Aristotle or his superiors have taught us has not yet subdued us to regularity; we still prefer the extravagant beauties of Shakspeare and Milton to the cold and well disciplined merit of Addison, and even to the sober and correct works of Pope. Nay, it was but t'other day that we were transported to hear Churchhill rave in numbers less chastised than Dryden's—but still in numbers like Dryden's."

H.—I suspect Walpole penned that nonsense, out of compliment to the national prejudices of his correspondent. He had been franker with a more celebrated Frenchman—Voltaire—who complained of his declaring war with him in defence of that buffoon Shakspeare. But to return to Warburton's comments.

See Ward, by battered beax invited over,
And desperate misery lays hold on Dover.

"There is a *prettiness*," says Warburton, "in this expression (*lays hold*) which depends on its contrast to that *slippery* medicine by which this quack (Ward) rendered himself famous, namely, *quicksilver*." (! !)

Not that I'd lop the beauties from his book,
Like slashing Bentley, with his desperate hook.

"Alluding," says Warburton, "to the several passages of Milton which Bentley has reprobated, by including them with—

* In his *Canons of Criticism*.

in hooks." Well may Warton ask if Warburton can be serious.

A.—Pope has several capital descriptions of such commentators as some of his own have turned out to be—here is one——

Those leave the sense their learning to display,
And those explain the meaning quite away.

H.—Pope tells us, in his *Moral Essays*, that riches are bestowed on mortals without distinction—

Given to the fool, the mad, the vain, the evil,
To Ward, to Waters, Chartres and the Devil.

And Warburton, with his usual sagacity, takes care to explain that in naming his Satanic Majesty, the poet alludes to "the vulgar opinion that all mines of metal and subterraneous treasures are in the guard of the Devil." (! !) The poet, speaking of medals struck by ambition to commemorate conquests, says :—

A narrow orb each crowded conquest keeps ;

which, says Warburton, is in ridicule of the Romans, who gave the title of *Orbis Romanus* to their empire. (! !)

That not in fancy's maze he wandered long,
But stooped to truth and moralized his song.

Here, according to the sagacious commentator, the poet alludes to a falcon *stooping* to its prey. (! !)

INDIAN SPORT.—It is impossible to conceive a more beautiful and romantic spectacle than a deer-hunt among the forest-clad mountains of Bundelcund. I happened once to be one of a large party who joined the Rajah of Chirkharee, in a sporting excursion. The preceding night his people completely surrounded the neighbourhood, and contracting their circle by degrees, at last confined the game within a narrow valley. Arriving at day-break at the appointed spot, we divided into two parties, and stationed ourselves on the sides of the hills. At the sound of the Rajah's horn, the people opened their circle, and then, with music and cheering, drove the game towards us. At once a thousand deer of almost every description (some of them of most extraordinary size) bounded along the valley ! I was at first so struck with their grace, beauty, and variety, that I was unable to use my fowling-piece ; but the Rajah, hinting his impatience or surprise at my unsportsmanlike and too poetical delay, I fired almost at random, and brought to the ground a noble animal, that required six men to carry it home.

OTHELLO.—Coleridge tells us that Othello is not a jealous man. He is not constitutionally so, certainly; he is made jealous. The jealousy of the Moor is not of that despicable character which always anticipates evil, and is ever on the watch. He is not one of those sly and greedy listeners who, according to the vulgar proverb, never hear any good of themselves. He is not a Paul Pry. His is the jealousy of a frank, fiery and impassioned nature that cannot brook a taint of dishonour either in love or war.

“A savage jealous that sometimes savours nobly.”

Twelfth-Night.

If his jealousy had been of that cast which characterizes mean and suspicious minds, instead of sympathizing with him in his afflictions, we should have regarded him with mingled hatred and contempt. His distress would have seemed a fitting punishment. Even if his jealousy had spontaneously arisen in his own heart, instead of its being forced upon him, as it was, by the circumvention of a fiend in human form, it would have greatly lessened our sympathy and respect. It is almost unnecessary to observe that it was not Shakespeare's desire to render him repulsive or contemptible, but, on the contrary, to compel us to love and honor him even while he is writhing with a passion which would have rendered a meaner nature intolerably hateful. Though he becomes the murderer of his spotless wife, he only deepens our pity. The more pure and precious was that angelic being, the heavier was his misfortune. We forget his guilt in his agony. Who does not sympathize with that terrible straining of the heartstrings, when the sense of his wife's death comes suddenly home to his apprehension, while *Amelia* is knocking at the chamber door?

“If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife :
My wife ! my wife ! what wife !—I have no wife.
O, insupportable ! O, heavy hour !”

We never cease to remember, that it was the intensity of his love and the boundless confidence of his friendship that exposed him to the subtle treachery of *Iago*. We could not despise him for his credulity without insulting virtue. It is not the credulity of weakness, like that of *Roderigo*, who, by the dark-lantern of his own mean imagination, sometimes catches a slight glimpse of the dreadful interior of *Iago's* mind and then all is veiled again. A noble spirit like that of *Othello* could form no conception of those hideous images that people the dim cell of a villain's heart.

POPE'S RHYMES.—He who, on the advice of Walsh, "the muse's judge and friend," devoted his chief energies to the task of surpassing all his predecessors in point of "correctness" did not scruple to make use of such rhymes as *thought fault—draught thought—skull fool—turn born—imbru'd blood—fiend friend—speak take—debate that—join line—compelling Helen—fellow prunnella*, and innumerable others of the same nature. I do not place any stress upon such trivial matters, but there are critics who would condemn in other poets what may pass unnoticed in the works of their own idol. Pope has himself observed, that poetry is an especially useful study to a foreigner desirous of speaking the language in which it may be written with accuracy and grace.

What will a child learn sooner than a song ?
What better teach a foreigner the tongue ?

No Englishman, however, who has a correct ear or judgment of his own, could listen with gravity or patience to the sound of such words as we have just quoted from Pope, if they were enunciated in exact correspondence to the rhyme. Poor Kirke White's first volume of poems, which he had sent to the editor of the *Monthly Review*, with such feverish anxiety, was condemned by the savage and senseless Aristarchus, because *boy* and *sky* were used as corresponding terminations ; though the same profound and impartial critic had, doubtless, seen rhymes greatly more imperfect in the works of Pope, without questioning for a moment that author's genius. It would be absurd, indeed, to judge of a poet's merits, exclusively by his accuracy as a rhymester ; but when an author's "*absolute faultlessness*"* (an expression applied by Lord Byron to the works of Pope) is too positively and frequently insisted upon, the attention of more sober critics is forced towards errors that would otherwise have escaped them entirely, or have been regarded with indifference. A humorous poem might be written by a punster, like Hood, upon the imperfect rhymes of Pope—such as, *groves loves (loaves)*,—*waste past (paste)*,—*care shear (share)*,—*take speak (spake)*,—*wear star (stare or stair)*,—*alone town (tone)*,—*desert heart (hurt)*,—*frost coast (cost)*,—*adores powers (pores or pours)*,—*joy tye (toy)*,—*trod showed (shod)*,—*track take (tack)*,—*join line (loin)*,—*worn turn (torn)*,—*song tongue (tong)*,—*extreme phlegm (phleme)*,—*come doom*

* What does even Pope himself say on this point ?

"Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be."

(*dumb*)—food *flood* (*flued*),—pour *shower* (*shore*), shower *pour* (*power*),—flood *stood* (*stud*),—bound *wound* [a hurt], *wound* [bandaged],—compare *war* (*wear* or *were*),—streams *Thames* (*themes*),—rest *least* (*lest*),—strow *bough* (bow [bo])—suffice *prize* (*price*),—adores *powers*, (*pores* or *pours*),—fool *skull* (*school*), &c., &c., &c. The above rhymes are taken faithfully from the pages of Pope, and without going through a very large portion of his productions.

ST. MICHAEL'S CAVE.—We visited the celebrated *San Michael's Cave*, at Gibraltar in the vast hollow rock. We entered at a low narrow opening in the side of the rock mountain, and passing some fifteen or twenty yards down a gradual but slippery descent, found ourselves in a vast subterranean cathedral, scooped out and carved and adorned by the hand of Nature, but so closely resembling the work of Art, as almost to raise a doubt, whether Nature could have been the sole architect. The broad and lofty stalactic columns, in many instances fluted with marvellous regularity and precision, and the grand though irregular gothic arches, assume, in the imperfect light of the flambeaux, the finest possible aspect of a dim religious temple of immeasurable extent. It is impossible with a few torches to pierce the gloom of the dark passages that surround you at every step you take. Some of the pillars hang only half way down from the roof, which gives the solid and weighty fragments the appearance of miraculously resting on mid air. Other columns rise six or eight feet only from the ground, and in the darkness visible startle one occasionally as with the presence of mysterious living figures, silent and motionless. The moving lights and shadows amidst the vast, stationary, eternal shapes around, have a mystical effect, at once sublime and awful. The sloping stone floor, slippery from perpetual drippings of water from the roof, craves wary walking, as you have not merely to dread a simple bruise upon the stone if you fall, but must run the chance of sliding down into some black, deep, stifling cavern. So many persons have lost their lives in exploring this dark subterranean temple, that an order has been issued forbidding any person to enter it without experienced guides, and the rude door at the entrance is now usually secured with lock and key.

SHYLOCK.—The Jews were long regarded by Christians as a species of moral lepers, with whom it was dangerous and disgraceful to associate. *Shylock* himself repeatedly avows, that he had been exposed to the most intolerable insults from them,

and until the incident of the bond, which showed more ingenuity than boldness, he does not appear to have once dared to retaliate. Had he attempted to take the law into his own hands, he would have been crushed like some obnoxious animal. His tribe were despised and defenceless outcasts. The Christians thought it no sin to treat them as pariahs. *Antonio*—

“A kinder gentleman walks not the earth” —

had spit upon *Shylock's* beard and called him dog; yet he applies to him in his necessities without a moment's hesitation, as if nothing likely to excite the active hostility of a Jew had occurred between them. He even replies to *Shylock*, when he reminds him of these indignities,

“I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.”

He then continues the pecuniary negotiation, and when *Shylock* offers him the money, and says he will take “no doit of usance,” but merely stipulate for the bond in “a merry sport,” this strange unnatural courtesy raises neither surprise nor suspicion in *Antonio's* mind. Yet the Merchant of Venice must have been sufficiently familiar with the character and condition of *Shylock's* tribe. It is evident that the Jews were looked upon as a people so thoroughly humiliated, that no injury or insult from a Christian was likely to raise in their breasts so noble a feeling as that of indignation. If *Shylock* had been bold and arrogant in his general bearing, the circumstance would have been particularly noticed by the Christians and his “merry bond” would have been suspected. A consciousness of the supreme contempt in which the Christians held his countrymen, is the main cause of the spleen and bitterness of *Shylock's* heart. Even *Antonio* entirely forgot his own generous nature when he came in contact with an Israelite. *Shylock* justly complains of him:

“He hath disgraced me, and hindered me of half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated my enemies, and what's his reason?—*I am a Jew?*”

Kean always remembered *Shylock's* true condition as the member of a feeble and despised community, and the habits which long subjection to the “proud man's contumely” engenders even in the noblest natures. *Shylock* never ventures to fling back those abusive epithets which sting his own heart to madness. When the Christians spit upon him and call him “cut-throat dog,” he simply reasons and remonstrates with them on their gross injustice, and hazards no expression

that would be likely to arouse their serious vengeance. His invectives are more general than theirs, and less personally offensive. In the pursuit of his own deep revenge, he takes an indirect and insidious course, and endeavours to entrap an enemy too powerful to combat openly. When he thinks he has him in his toils, he begins to assume a somewhat more confident tone and a bolder bearing, which gradually increase as *Antonio's* difficulties become more inextricable, and the legal advantages over him appear more decided. It is many years since I saw Kean in *Shylock*, but I have still a lively recollection of the truth of keeping which he displayed throughout. The Jew's voice and manner grew gradually firmer and more daring as he appeared to approach the consummation of his desires, but he never hazarded a gratuitous provocation, and he never *stormed*. He seemed to think his whole object included in the power of his bond. He looked and spoke as if he felt that were he to lose that, he would lose every thing, and sink again into comparative insignificance and contempt. When *Gratiano* throws out a series of violent invectives, and exclaims,

"O, be thou damned, inexorable dog!"

Shylock contents himself with the cool reply:

"Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond
Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud;
Repair thy wit good youth, or it will fall
To cureless ruin. *I stand here for law.*"

The generality of actors, however, mistake the Jew's temperament and manner. They make him a passionate and blustering bully; whereas he was sullen, cautious, and deliberate. He was not continually hurried away by gusts of passion, nor was it any sudden and unlooked for provocation that had stirred up the deepest and worst parts of his nature. He was not inebriated with rage. He had long brooded over the degradation of his tribe and his own personal wrongs.

"For sufferance is the badge of all his tribe."

Had he been allowed the opportunity to "wreak his soul upon expression," and pour on the heads of the Christians as many showers of scalding curses as he had received upon his own, his passion would have lost much of its intensity and virulence. Perfect freedom of speech would have operated like a safety-valve. But bearing as he did "the pelting of the pitiless storm" of the Christian's hatred, without daring to return it, his passions gained force by concealment and concentration. It was rarely that the tempest in his heart broke out in thunder.

The original force of his nature, and this conventional

restraint, combined to give a unity and depth to his character, that were rather indicated by the steadiness of his purpose than by any extravagance of language or of manner. Profound and powerful minds do not give way to frequent ebullitions of idle rage. To scold and rave is the part of a woman or a bully. Deep waters are still. There is a self-possession in the Jew that is almost sublime. Amidst a host of powerful and malignant enemies, and with every disadvantage of position, he is so far from being bewildered by his emotions, or thrown off his guard, that he seems to say just so much and no more, in the way of self-defence and retaliation, as is consistent with his personal safety and the furtherance of his object. Though he ventures upon sundry bitter taunts and sneers, they are only of such a character as his enemies, from a consciousness of superior power might be supposed to tolerate. He does not call the Christians dogs, or spit and spurn them, as they do at him.

Abstracting our minds from Christian prejudices, we cannot help sympathizing, in some degree, with Shakespeare's Jew; but the Jew, as he is generally represented on the stage, seems so well able to take his own part and to brow-beat his enemies that he is too powerful to be pitied. The Christians themselves have the tables turned upon them. They are the persecuted party. There is also too much of the demon in the acted Jew. If *Shylock* hates *Antonio* "for that he is a Christian," the Christians hate *Shylock* for that he is a Jew, and not merely on account of his defective moral qualities as a man. A respectable Jewish audience would not regard *Shylock* with the horror that thrills a Christian audience. They would not only sympathize in his sufferings, but admire his indomitable character and his unanswerable logic. A Christian of the same character, placed under similar circumstances, would receive the same indulgence from people of his own faith. If *Shylock* is somewhat too fierce and unforgiving, his countrymen would recollect that his bosom is a volcano that has laboured long and fiercely, not only with the internal fire enkindled by his own wrongs, but the intolerable, and at last irrepressible sense of the injuries and indignities heaped upon "his sacred nation."

The conclusion of the play is unsatisfactory. We are pained to see a powerful and deeply injured spirit so completely thwarted and subdued by a mere quibble, and are shocked at the absurd and unnecessary insult of insisting (as a part of his punishment too!) "that he do presently become a Christian!" *Shylock's* immediate consent to this humiliating demand, and his casting off the religion of his ancestors, like an old coat, at a single jerk, appears inconsis-

tent with the force and inflexibility of his character. It is at all events difficult to conceive the glory or utility of making a nominal convert to Christianity by taking advantage of a legal quirk, and "convincing a man against his will" by the threatened alternative of sundry pains and penalties. The Jew, however, could not have turned into a real Christian, and scarcely into a hypocrite. It was more easy for *Falstaff* to give reasons upon compulsion, than *Shylock* to give faith.

PERSONAL INFLUENCE OF GENIUS.—Generally speaking, though there are many exceptions to the rule, egotism and vanity are unfavourable signs. It is the want of knowledge that makes us vain. The profoundest spirits are commonly the humblest. Newton compared himself to a child gathering pebbles on the sea-shore. The farther we advance, the longer appears our road ; for the more we see before us,

" Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise."

The perusal of superior books has not the same humbling effect as the meeting with superior men. A book is a kind of abstraction, but a personal contact with our betters occasions that strong sense of inferiority which is so painful to little minds and so useful to noble ones. The anxiety which some people evince to escape from such uncongenial company, and their bitter humiliation and restless discontent, until restored to their own little circle of admirers, is an illustration of this remark. A library is not so great a check on our self-approbation, though adorned even with a Milton and a Shakespeare ! In minds, indeed, duly chastened and subdued by extensive study, a work of true genius will always excite a reverent admiration ; but I am now alluding to its effects on those writers and readers who possess but a superficial knowledge of literature and life. They who are apt to talk flippantly and even to think lightly of books, are brought to their own level in the presence of living genius.

MODESTY IN PRIVATE LIFE NOT INCONSISTENT WITH GREAT BOLDNESS AS AN AUTHOR.—It is strange how easily some men who are shy in private, run into a bold egotism in public. They who are much in the habit of addressing the public, acquire a confidence of success, and fall into a degree of familiarity with their thousands of unseen and unknown readers, that is quite unaccountable to those who have confined themselves to the intercourse of private life. It is like uttering impudent or foolish things in a dark room. No rebuking eye kindles a

blush upon the speaker's cheek. The author and the public do not meet face to face. The former sends out his oracles or his egotisms, from the concealment of his quiet study. The late William Hazlitt was a striking illustration of the strange contrast which a person may present between his public and his private manners. He was a bold and egotistical author, but a shy man. In addressing the whole world, he was often daring and dogmatical; but in a small private company, if any strangers were present, he could scarcely muster up sufficient courage to go through the ordinary ceremonies of social intercourse.

RAIL-ROAD TRAVELLING IN ENGLAND.—Of Rail-Road travelling, the reality is quite different from the idea that descriptions of it had left upon my mind. Unpoetical as this sort of transit may seem to some people, I confess I find it excite and satisfy the imagination. The wondrous speed—the quick change of scene—the perfect comfort—the life-like character of the power in motion, the invisible, and mysterious, and mighty steam-horse, urged, and guided, and checked by the hand of science—the cautionary, long, shrill whistle—the beautiful grey vapor, the breath of the great animal, floating over the fields by which we pass, sometimes hanging stationary for a moment in the air, and then melting away like a vision—furnish sufficiently congenial amusement for an observer who has the least spark of poetry in his nature.

THE EFFECT OF WRITING INDIFFERENT VERSES.—The world is too apt to judge decidedly of a man's general powers by his failure in some particular department of human knowledge, without a due consideration of his capacity for other studies. Thus a man who has written bad poetry is thought unfit for every thing, and has sunk his reputation for ever. He cannot hope to be regarded as an able man, until people forget that he has committed the sin of rhyme; and this oblivion, he is generally the last to desire or to anticipate. Men who are in reality greatly his inferiors, but who have been more fortunate in hitting upon a congenial and profitable pursuit in life, seem privileged to speak of him with a mixture of pity and contempt.

ACTING.—Amateur actors in general, are not, perhaps, sufficiently aware of the effect which may be produced upon an audience by ordinary talents, when accompanied by perfect ease and self-possession. In their awe and anxiety,

their judgment quite deserts them, and it is to no purpose they work themselves up for convulsive exertions at what they regard as the only *telling* points. This high straining only makes them the more deplorably nerveless and relaxed, when the sudden burst of animation as suddenly subsides. They are then as much too low as they were before too high. Anxious or desperate timidity always misses the mark. It is better for a debutant to be less ambitious of occasional displays until he has felt his way. In the first instance, he should aim rather at an uniform propriety than at fine starts and striking passages; because even if he occasionally succeeds, in some measure, in a solitary and hard-studied point, the contrast with his general tameness only the more conspicuously betrays his labour, and shows that he has no genuine or continuous feeling of his part. All illusion is then destroyed, his identity is no longer involved in his assumed character, and the audience recognize only the imperfect actor. It is safer, therefore, to be a little too cold or tame in the emphatic passages, than to make them start out abruptly from the timid restraint of the general performance, for nothing can be more strikingly unnatural and ineffective, than inequalities of his nature. The finest delivery of a single highly impassioned burst, would be ridiculous in a man who, throughout the rest of his performance, should exhibit a personification of awkward apathy. He would remind us of an automaton just wound up and put into temporary motion. If an actor were to do little more than *walk through his part* with entire self-possession, he would not so glaringly betray his unfitness as by these ridiculous out-breaks. The humblest by-play ought to have an air of entire truth and reality. The actor ought never to drop his arms, stand still, and stare at the audience. As long as he is on the stage he should feel that he has a part to perform, and always try to perform it well.

HAZLITT AND GIFFORD.—*H.*—It was a beautiful remark of Leigh Hunt's that Hazlitt's criticism threw a rich light upon his subject, as from a painted window. I never read one of his criticisms on our old popular poets, without turning eagerly again to their pages with a double relish. He does not merely dissect the flesh and bones; but makes you feel, in the core of your own heart, the very spirit of his author. Criticism that has this effect is worthy of the name. For my part, when I read such genuine and noble criticism, for such it is, though I think Hazlitt inferior to Schlegel in the philosophy of his art, I cannot help wondering how such a dry pragmatistical stickler for rigid rules as Gifford,

should have been looked upon by any man, woman, or child, in the light of a critic at all; though Byron thought him the best critic of his time. You know how Byron used to submit his poetry to him, previous to publication, when that little-minded presumptuous person used to write on the margin "*Strike out this section,*" "*Omit the last six couplets,*" "*Despicable stuff,*" &c.

L.—Gifford's critical acumen may be judged of by the fact that in his edition of Massinger, he asserts that Shakespeare's most characteristic excellence, and indeed the only quality in which he excels other writers, is *wit*! He informs us also that rhythmical modulation is not one of Shakespeare's merits. There is nothing much worse than this in Rymer, who describes *Othello* as "a bloody farce, without salt or savor," that fills the head with "vanity, confusion, tintamarre and gingle-jangle."

POETIC FAME.—It is melancholy to reflect upon the vicissitudes of literature. Nothing is more changeable and uncertain than poetic fame. It depends upon so many adventitious circumstances. A poet may be born an age too soon or too late—he may be puffed into a sudden elevation, only to be hurled down again into the gulph of oblivion by the stern re-action that always follows undeserved laudation—or he may have timid or prosaic friends that check his ambition, or fierce and indefatigable enemies that frighten him into silence, with ridicule and calumny,—or he may have a rival in his own peculiar line, whose glare of fame attracts all eyes away from lesser luminaries that might have shone proudly in his absence,—or he may have failed to procure the friendship of some leading literary journalist, who, by repeated and earnest notices, might have forced his merits into public notice,—or he may have entrusted his offspring to some tasteless and unfashionable publisher, without influence, energy or ambition. When a disappointed bard of the present day, conscious of some share of merit, looks over the list of the popular poets of the past generation, he may well be excused for wondering at the uncertainty of the public taste. Many a neglected and despised writer of these times, has produced verses that would have excited a sensation in the reign of the Kings and the Dukes, the Pomfrets and the Eusdens, the Walsh's and the Welsteds, the Fentons and the Sprats. This small fry played about exultingly in the sunlit stream of fame for no inconsiderable period. But it is satisfactory to reflect, that though it has often happened, that authors of little or no merit have enjoyed a temporary popularity, no work of real genius that has once been fairly brought into public notice, has been

suffered to fall into that entire oblivion, which has sooner or later been the fate of every truly worthless production, however much it may have been upheld and overrated for awhile.

DRYDEN AND POPE.—*H.*—I think it can hardly now be a question whether Pope was a poet or not, though it is still open to all critics to consider in what rank he is to be placed. Of course, no one who knows what poetry is, would put him on an equality with Shakespeare or Milton; but I sometimes doubt whether he did not surpass his master Dryden.

A.—Oh no—never! Dryden always wrote with easy force, and with a manly unaffected precision. There was too often something petty and effeminate in Pope.

L.—Perhaps Dryden had the more vigorous understanding, but Pope had the greater genius. Dryden's claims as a poet somewhat puzzle me, for he possessed in a comparatively limited degree the peculiar powers of a poet's mind. He had little imagination, little fancy, little pathos—Pope had much of all three.

A.—But in Dryden there was an earnestness and force that supplied their place. There seems to be an order of poetry which has never been distinctly recognized, and which is produced by the mere concentration of vigorous mental powers. Dryden's poetry is at the head of this class in later times, though if we go back a little, we shall place Ben Jonson on the throne of the poetry of strong thinking; as we place Shakespeare at the head of those poets who do not address themselves directly to the understanding, but reach it through the imagination and the affections. Unimaginative but shrewd didactic poets and mere satirists in verse, may be fairly placed in the school of Ben Jonson and Dryden.

H.—I think your view of this subject a novel one. If acted upon it would enable us to rank several writers in the list of true poets who are now regarded as mere versifiers. You might admit Crabbe into your category.

LIFE AT SEA.—How monotonous is life at sea! We soon grow tired of the same measured walk upon the deck of the vessel; and, however brief the voyage may be, it always seems too long, unless there is love-making or coquetting between the sexes, or men of thought and observation and congenial minds are happily brought together. The ship's officers in calm weather lead a strange, dull life. They seem only to kill time—to waste existence. Even the passengers themselves, however studious or contem-

plative on land, are generally idle and restless at sea. Every one seems to feel unsettled on ship-board, even those who spend their life-time on the waves. A sailor appears to me in the condition of a being who is out of the natural sphere of social existence. A man who has been shut up in a jail on land, seems hardly to have suffered a greater loss of life than the sailor in his floating prison. A mere passenger is almost always impatient of what he feels to be lost time. A sea voyage is but a parenthesis in human life—a sort of *aside*—a period not to be counted in the general sum total of days, and months, and years; and even sailors themselves are always looking towards the end of each voyage, though it is only the beginning of another.

ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND.—As after my long absence from England, I smoothly glided, as in a sledge, over the level iron road, with such ease and magical rapidity—from the pretty and cheerful town of Southampton to the greatest city of the civilized world—I gave way to child-like wonder and child-like exultation. What a quick succession of lovely landscapes greeted the eye on either side! What a garden-like air of universal cultivation! What beautiful, smooth slopes! What green, quiet meadows! What rich round trees brooding over their silent shadows! What exquisite dark nooks and romantic lanes! What an aspect of unpretending happiness in the clean cottages, with their little trim gardens! What an air of tranquil grandeur and rural luxury in the noble mansions and glorious parks of the British aristocracy! How the love of nature thrilled my heart with a gentle and delicious agitation, and how proud I felt of my dear native land! It is, indeed, a fine thing to be an Englishman. Whether at home or abroad, he is made conscious of the claims of his country to respect and admiration. As I fed my eye on the loveliness of Nature, or turned to the miracles of Art and Science on every hand, I had always in my mind a secret reference to the effect which a visit to England must produce upon an intelligent and observant foreigner.

In travelling through the agricultural districts of England, I wondered where the pauperism and misery were hidden, of which every one has heard so much. I saw nothing of them until I entered the large manufacturing towns, or their immediate neighbourhood.

When I looked at the smiling cottages in the country, I thought I could live delightedly on the smallest income, in a sort of Arcadian retirement, but when I got into the restless and mighty heart of the over-grown metropolis of England—of the world rather—and witnessed the signs of eager toil

and feverish rivalry, and observed the desperate struggles of so many thousands of intelligent human beings to support a bare animal existence, I felt my own feebleness and insignificance, and acknowledged the necessity of returning to a field less fiercely contested. Though overwhelmed with a sense of the greatness and grandeur of this unrivalled city—though, as an Englishman, I am proud of its mighty and eternal structures, and the genius, and science, and bravery, and virtue that are found within its countless walls—though I am sensible of its endless variety of attractions for both the frivolous and the thoughtful—I confess it is not the part of the world in which I should be best pleased to take up my abode for life, even supposing that I possessed the golden key which opens the door to so many enjoyments in the centre of civilization.

GENIUS AND LEARNING.—The world in general do not understand what genius is ;—it is confounded with abstruse learning or mere cleverness. Some people stare if you tell them that Shakespeare and Burns, of whose intellectual greatness they have only a vague general notion, were, in the ordinary sense of the words, ignorant or ill-educated men. Coarse shrewdness, or a mere knowledge of languages, or superficial accomplishments, they can appreciate at once—but they cannot recognize the claims of original genius. It is difficult to persuade the mob that a good linguist may be a stupid fellow, or that a man who knows no language but his own may be a great genius.

Yet he that is but able to express
No sense at all in several languages,
Will pass for learned than he that's known
To speak the strongest reason in his own.

The showy acquirements of a smart man of the world are often preposterously elevated above the rarest gifts of intellect. Even men of great learning are sometimes miserably incapable of appreciating original power, or recognizing its true signs. The learned Dr. Parr once fell upon his knees and kissed with reverence the stupid forgeries of Ireland, who pretended to have discovered some unpublished plays of Shakespeare. Bentley with his "slashing hook" *improved* Milton. It requires no ordinary penetration to do full justice to the mental superiority of men with whom we are brought into close contact ; familiarity is apt to breed contempt—at least in vulgar minds. I once asked a gentleman what he thought of Hazlitt, to whom I had lately introduced him ;—" Oh ! he's an odd fellow !" was the reply.

BLANK-VERSE.—*H.*—With respect to Landor, you are, I suppose, aware that Wordsworth once paid him the compliment of imitation ; perhaps, you do not recollect Landor's description of a sea-shell in his *Gebir* ?

A.—Like Byron, I must admit that I never read the poem ; but I think I have seen the passage you allude to quoted somewhere. I have but a faint recollection of its character. I remember that Wordsworth has been charged with the imitation you speak of.

H.—Well, here is the passage in Landor, and I will follow it up with the imitation :—

But I have sinuous shells of pearly hue
Within, and they that lustre have imbibed
In the sun's palace porch ; where, when unyoked,
His chariot wheel stands midway in the wave.
Shake one, and it awakens ; then apply
Its polished lips to your attentive ear,
And it remembers its august abodes,
And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.

Now here is Wordsworth's. It is more elaborate, and, perhaps, upon the whole, more beautiful ; but Landor has the merit of the original thought :—

“ I have seen
A curious child, applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell,
To which, in silence hushed, his very soul
Listened intensely, and his countenance soon
Brightened with joy, for, murmuring from within,
Were heard sonorous cadences ! whereby
To his belief the monitor expressed
Mysterious union with his native sea.

A.—Well—though I am not one of Landor's admirers, I must be candid enough to say that I differ with you in your preference of Wordsworth's lines. The thought in the Laker is not merely expanded but diluted.

H.—You would be well pleased with the blank-verse of *Gebir*. It is vigorous and varied, and discovers a learned ear. Though the story is vague and ill-developed, the verse teems with the imagery of a true poet. I will give you a few chance specimens as I turn the leaves hurriedly :—

Go, but go early, ere the gladsome hours
Strew saffron in the path of rising morn ;
Ere the bee, buzzing o'er flowers fresh disclosed,
Examine where he may the best alight
Nor scatter off the bloom ; ere cold-lipped herds
Crop the pale herbage round each other's bed.

The epithet *cold-lipped*, applied to herds at early morn, is excellent, and worthy of the author of the *Seasons*.

He listened ; and on her his eyes intent
Perceived her not ; and now she disappeared ;
So deep he pondered her important words.

The representation of the intent eye, blinded by the more intense activity of the sense of hearing, is fine and true. Here is another beautiful passage. Observe the variety of the pause and the neatly turned close :—

Here some observed

Religious rites, some hospitality :
 Strangers, who from the good old men retired,
 Closed the gate gently, lest from generous use,
 Shutting and opening of its own accord,
 It shake unsettled slumbers off their couch,
 Some stopped revenge athirst for slaughter, some
 Showed the slow olive for a race unborn.
 These had no wishes ; therefore, none are crowned :
 But theirs are tufted banks, theirs umbrage, theirs
 Enough of sunshine to enjoy the shade,
 And breeze enough to lull them to repose.

Here is a sketch of a hyena. How exact and spirited are the few brief touches.

At human step

The fierce hyena frightened from the walls,
 Bristled his rising back, his teeth unsheathed,
 Drew the long growl, and with slow foot retired.

A.—You'll make me a convert to your faith in Landor's genius. These are really fine passages.

H.—I particularly call your attention to Landor's blank verse, because some of our best writers use this measure weakly, not always from want of strength, but sometimes from want of care. Look, for instance, at Byron's blank-verse in *Cain*. Here is an example :—

Lucifer.— I show thee what thy predecessors are,
 And what they were thou feeblest, in degree
 Inferior as thy petty feelings and
 Thy pettier portion of the immortal part
 Of high intelligence and earthly strength.
 What ye in common have with what they had
 Is life, and what ye *shall* have—death : *the rest*
 Of your poor attributes is such as *suits*
 Reptiles engendered out of the *subsiding*
 Slime of a mighty universe, crushed *into*
 A scarcely yet shaped planet, peopled *with*
 Things whose enjoyment was to be in blindness—
 A paradise of ignorance, from *which*
 Knowledge was barred as poison.

How "harshly" these lines "grate upon their hinges!" What miserably feeble terminations! But there are worse in *Werner*. Byron handled every form of English versification more successfully than blank-verse, which, however, is the pride of our language. His mastery of rhymed verse in the *Don Juan* stanza was quite marvellous.

A.—And he sometimes succeeded, I think, in a blank-verse, too ; parts of *Manfred*, and *The Dream*, are very admirably versified, and many of the lines, especially in the latter, have that free vibration of which he is thought by some critics to

have afforded but few examples. With respect to *Werner* and *Cain* they were both hurried productions, though the latter has been described as particularly elaborate. "But what *does* Jeffery mean by *elaborate*?" asks Lord Byron in one of his letters,—“Why! they ‘(parts of *Cain*)’ were written as fast as I could put pen to paper.” *Werner*, as you say, bears still stronger internal evidence of carelessness. Campbell, or one of his assistant reviewers, quotes a passage with lines ending in *ifs, ofs, buts, and ands*: observing that if that be poetry, he was wrong in taking Byron’s preface for prose, as it would run on ten feet just as well. He puts a sentence or two of the preface into *Wernerian* blank-verse :—

Some of the characters are modified
Or altered, a few of the names changed, and
One character, *Ida of Stralenheim*,
Added by myself; but in the rest the
Original is chiefly followed. When
I was young (about fourteen, I think,) I
First read this tale, which made a deep impression upon me.

UNJUST DEPRECIATION OF LITERATURE.—*H.*—The lovers of Literature owe to Scott and Byron something of a grudge for disdaining the means by which they fixed upon themselves the eyes of nations, and secured for themselves an immortality. Lord Byron might have attributed some portion of the personal respect he met with in society to his title and to his physical achievements; but I confess that it is a puzzle to me how Scott, a plain country gentleman, who was received with such extraordinary honors, by Kings and Princes, and crowded theatres, should have failed to perceive that he owed his greatness exclusively to literary fame, and that mankind, at all events, differed widely from himself in their estimate of the dignity and the importance of literature, compared with all the ordinary avocations and practical details of private or public life. But he was a thoroughly manly and modest-minded person, and probably, he wilfully closed his eyes to a truth that he feared might somewhat turn his head. His unaffected simplicity of character—his absence of all pretension—his easy familiarity with the poor—the manner in which he preserved his earliest and humblest friends to his latest day, when all Europe almost idolized his name, and his equal conduct in prosperity and adversity, present a rare and beautiful instance of a heart and mind unaltered by those influences which subject all ordinary men to a trial almost too severe for poor, weak, human nature. Never was a popular writer so utterly free from all vanity or envy. His warm and eager admiration of Byron’s poetry, when he

felt that it threw his own into the shade, is a delightful illustration of the disinterestedness and nobility of his nature.

L.—Oh yes—take him for all in all—this century has not produced his fellow, though he had some defects, both as an individual and as an author; and I cannot help saying so, for I am ‘nothing if not critical.’ As a Novelist he is first in the first class. He does not display, perhaps, so much knowledge of life and nature as Fielding, nor has he the grace and finish of Goldsmith; but he has infinitely more invention than either, and in the power of poetical description in prose he leaves them both far behind.

H.—Strange, indeed, that a man who could write such books as the famous Scotch Novels should imagine that the routine of official duties or the labors of the mechanic, surpass in utility or importance the productions of genius! Not so thought any great thinker of whom I have ever heard. He who produces an immortal book, helps to mould, age after age, the minds of millions of men, and adds something to the intellectual character of his country. The good that one single individual can effect in a municipal appointment, or in any trade or profession, or in private life, is pitifully local and limited, if brought into comparison with the effect of a single good book that has taken its place in the literature of the country. What individual, let his profession, or office, or disposition be what it may, can influence the same number of minds as a successful author? The almost limitless effect of the Literature of a nation upon its moral and intellectual character, is too vast and palpable a fact to be denied by the greatest worshippers of what are called practical utilities.

L.—Scott and Byron were disgusted with shallow pretenders to literature and genius, who generally give themselves airs of intolerable self-conceit. These are doubtless a detestable set; but it is absurd to under-rate literature on their account. They only prove its real dignity, by showing the impossibility of such people ever grasping its highest honors. We might as well speak with disgust and contempt of painting, when we see a daub upon a sign-post. Painting is a noble art, requiring high genius for the attainment of excellence in it. In proportion to the difficulty and dignity of the art are its numbers of mere pretenders. But the failures of the crowd, instead of disgusting a great artist with his art, make him love and admire it the more. If excellence in it were easier and less rare, he would cease to be proud of his own labors. When we find that almost any ordinary tradesman can do what he undertakes to do, and that almost all official and professional men get

through the details of their office or profession pretty smoothly, we are not disposed to idolize them for their success.

H.—When it was generally known that Scott was involved in the failure of the Messrs. Ballantyne and Company, he was overwhelmed with offers of money and appointments. The Paymaster of the Forces (then Lord John Russell) sent him a message to the effect that whatever sum would relieve him from his embarrassments, would be immediately advanced from the Treasury. A Government Steamer was placed at his disposal when he required a change of climate. Amongst other extraordinary kindnesses, he received a magnificent anonymous offer of thirty thousand pounds; and a teacher of the harp begged his acceptance of six hundred pounds—the hard savings of years! Did Scott imagine all this enthusiasm and gratitude and generosity was excited by his character as a Sheriff? Could he mistake for a moment the universal feeling, not towards a private Scotch gentleman, who had been unfortunate in his pecuniary speculations, but towards the author of those works of fiction, founded in general truth, which had given instruction and delight to countless readers, and which had raised the character of the national literature, and spread the author's name to all quarters of the globe? Could he suppose that these attentions would have been paid him had he never written poem or romance, though he had risen to the highest professional distinction in law, politics, physic, or divinity, or had been the greatest printer, or book-seller, or ship-owner, or tallow-chandler in Europe? And are all people in error who display this feeling of gratitude and idolatry towards those men of genius whose “published labors” are an honor to their country, and a rich legacy to mankind? The public know very well what they are doing when they thus acknowledge the dignity and importance of literature, and pay more respect to great authors than to men who have distinguished themselves in what is called the practical business of life.

L.—It is a pity that such men as Scott and Byron should have furnished weapons to envious dunces with which to assault their superiors. England has already sufficiently disgraced herself by her ingratitude towards too many of her intellectual benefactors, suffering them to starve to death and then proudly honoring their graves—granting them a monumental stone in reply to their petition for bread. We have something to learn from the French in this respect. They do not postpone their offerings to genius, until they cannot be accepted. During the last half century, there has been a manifest change for the better in the conduct of the British people towards such of their countrymen as are distinguished

for genius in literature and science—but there is still great room for improvement, and such false and traitorous depreciation of their own literary pursuits as Scott and Byron were guilty of, is calculated to throw the crowd back again into their former indifference towards contemporary genius.

H.—I would remind the “practical” men of David Hume’s tribute to the dignity of letters. “Such a superiority,” said he, “have the pursuits of literature over all others, that even he who attains but a mediocrity in them, merits praise above those who most excel in the common or vulgar professions.” I believe I give very nearly his exact words, though I quote from memory.

L.—I would add to Hume’s tribute to literature in general that of Burke to poetry:—“Poetry,” said he, “is the study of human nature; and as this is the first object of philosophy, poetry will always rank first amongst human compositions.”

HAZLITT AND TURNER.—*R.*—Hazlitt was below the middle size, and, from extreme shyness and a morbid sensibility, he had always an awkward and timid air in mixed company. He had a magnificent forehead, and a fine eye; and is said to have been extremely handsome in early life, but care and thought ploughed up his features in manhood. His gait was slouching and his dress slovenly. His hat was generally too large for his head, or put on without the least regard to its shape, the side sometimes usurping the honors of the front. Though anything but a lady’s man, he was extremely courteous and polite to those ladies who had the art to make him feel himself at his ease with them. At an earlier period of his life, I believe, he was no enemy to the bottle; but when I knew him, he suffered severely from indigestion, and never drank anything stronger than tea, in which he indulged as freely as Doctor Johnson himself. The tea-pot was on his table half the day. He made his tea so strong that few other people could drink it; and I have no doubt, that it affected his nerves and aggravated his stomach disorders. The first day he dined with me, I was vexed to discover that there was not on the table the only sort of meat he could venture upon—a mutton chop; but having discovered this, by mere accident, in good time, I contrived to gratify his fancy before the cloth was removed.

L.—Was he much in London?

R.—He visited the great city, pretty frequently, but he generally resided at an old inn, called the *Hut*, at Winterslow—on or near Salisbury Plain. Here he wrote most

of his best essays. When in London, he used to lie in bed very late in the morning, and then sit for hours over his tea. He ridiculed the early-to-rise men, who had nothing to do when they got out of bed, and used to quote Thomson's reply to one who enquired why he did not get up earlier—"Young man," said the poet ("more fat than bard be seems") "I have no motive." And yet in his *Seasons*, Thomson complains of sluggards—

Falsely luxurious will not man awake ?

L.—It is recorded of Thomson that he would sometimes leisurely eat peaches off a tree in his garden, resting both hands in his waistcoat pockets. But it is wonderful what some indolent men of genius have accomplished—what legacies they have left to mankind! Neither Thomson nor Hazlitt lived in vain.

H.—Hazlitt was the best critic on the Fine Arts that England has produced. He thoroughly understood them, practically and theoretically. He was a painter himself in early life, but he had more judgment than skill, and was so little satisfied with his own performances, that he gave up the art in despair, though I have seen some of his paintings which struck me as indicating decided genius. If my memory is not deceiving me, I once saw in a house in London, his portrait of an old woman, a performance of which he speaks so fondly in one of his essays. I have a more distinct remembrance of a small rough water-color sketch of himself, from his own hand, on the inner side of the binding of an old volume of his *Table Talk*. It was a capital likeness. I went one day with him to the Water-Color Exhibition in Suffolk-street. He did not seem much pleased upon the whole. He repeated an old pun, declaring that he disliked *Westall* even more than *all West*. We then went to the National Gallery. He had no sooner entered the front room upstairs, than his face brightened, and he exclaimed, "Now I am at home!" The living, breathing, speaking portrait of Gevartius by Vandyke on his right—the rich allegorical landscape by Rubens, directly facing him—the Claudes, Poussins, and other immortal works, glowing on the walls on every side of us, seemed to hold his faculties in enchantment. On our way home we passed a shop-window, in which were two large engravings from landscapes by Turner. "Ah! I once thought," said he, "that Turner would have been a second Claude. But he has disappointed me. There is something imposing in his style, but there is no repose in it. It is theatrical, fluttery, flaunting—it is any thing but Claude-like now."

After all, perhaps, Hazlitt did great injustice to Turner. That artist is not all that a critic like Hazlitt might desire, but I am inclined to think that he is still the best landscape painter in England. He is not a Claude, it is true, but if he wants Claude's repose and grace he has more spirit and versatility. If you have seen one of Claude's pictures you have seen them all, exquisite as they are. There is a great sameness and mannerism in them. Some years ago I saw two or three capital pictures by Turner, at a public exhibition of Paintings, in Calcutta. I remember that one of them was a view of *Shakespeare's Cliff*. Beautifully and naturally, and yet with something of an audacious spirit, a darkened boat was placed on the very edge of a patch of sunshine. The effect was magical. Turner's contrasts are strikingly felicitous—miracles of art. He has studied the finest and rarest aspects of nature with a determination to startle and delight us until we are almost "dazzled and drunk with beauty."

L.—Does he not sometimes flatter Nature?

R.—Oh that's impossible! I have often looked upon a few feet of weeds and water glittering in the setting sun, and felt how their beauty would have defied the most exquisite colorist that ever lived. There is, indeed, exaggeration in painting, as there is bombast in poetry, but no poet or painter has yet done full justice to moral beauty, or to the loveliness of nature.

L.—But painters may improve upon particular and individual specimens, by a judicious selection from boundless varieties, or by new and tasteful combinations; though, of course, Nature in the abstract cannot be surpassed by Art.

R.—The painting by Turner to which I have been alluding must have been finished before he changed his style of coloring, and, to the mortification of his admirers, made his sunsets look like the yolks of eggs flung upon the canvas and gave his trees the appearance of having been scratched into shape with a bundle of bad pens.

POEMS.—We go over favourite poems till we have them by heart, and repeat them a thousand times, and love and enjoy them the more at every repetition. There is a preciousness in the very words,—hallowed as they are by a kind of inspiration. In other forms of literature, we care less for the words because the words are less sacred—less happily chosen, and are not so essentially connected with dearly treasured thoughts or images. Facts and sentiments of a prosaic and utilitarian nature, however valuable in themselves, do not at once receive and reflect a charm from the words in which they are enshrined, as is the case with poetical truths. . . .

POPE'S DEBTS TO DRYDEN.—H.—As Gray's affectionate first Editor, Mason, and his later Editor, Matthias, have traced his beauties to their original sources (save us from our friends!) the world is left in no uncertainty as to the extent of that poet's plunderings; but I think, notwithstanding, the industry of Warton, and Roscoe, and Bowles (and the last cannot be accused of editorial partiality), the sin of Pope, in this way, are comparatively little known. He has pilfered freely from the meanest of his tribe, and, perhaps, his master, Dryden, is the only great writer to whom he is much indebted. You may sometimes trace an image or expression back to Milton—but very rarely, and I do not think he has once borrowed from Shakespeare, though he edited his plays, and marked, what he considered the best passages, by inverted commas. But he had no great opinion of the first poet of the world, and his edition of him was the worst ever published. It was driven out of the field even by poor Theobald's. Pope used to remark that Shakespeare's style was the style of a bad age. Perhaps Dryden was the only poet whose writings he thoroughly enjoyed. But who does not enjoy Dryden?—Ah! glorious old John—does he not handle the old heroic couplet better than any of his predecessors or successors? What are the merits of Waller and Pope as versifiers compared with the free, easy, sonorous, varied, elastic harmony of Dryden? As to the affected discords and slipshod measures of some of our yet living writers, and the heavy, abrupt, and sometimes lumbering lines of Byron, or the sluggish feeble verse of Wordsworth, it is a perfect farce to speak of them as improvements upon Dryden's ten-syllable couplet measure. Still worse, perhaps, is Pope's mechanical exactness and unvaried rhythm. Here is a specimen of Dryden's heroic verse, which I defy any critic to match for judicious and expressive variety of pause, and the general harmony of its construction, in the whole range of English poetry, from Chaucer to Tom Moore—

Whilst listening to the murmuring leaves he stood,
 More than a mile immersed within the wood,
 At once the wind was laid ; the whispering sound
 Was dumb ; a rising earthquake rocked the ground ;
 With deeper brown the grove was overspread ;
 A sudden horror seized his giddy head,
 And his ears tingled and his color fled.
 Nature was in alarm ; some danger nigh
 Seemed threatened, though unseen to mortal eye,
 Unused to fear, he summoned all his soul,
 And stood collected in himself and whole ;
 Not long : for soon a whirlwind rose around,
 And from afar he heard a screaming sound,
 As of a dame distressed, who cried for aid,
 And then he heard lament the secret shade.

How exquisitely the cæsural pause floats from one wave to another in this flood of music !

Here is another specimen of lighter and brisker harmony :—

A milk-white hind, immortal and unchanged,
Fed on the lawns or in the forest ranged ;
Without unspotted, innocent within,
She feared no danger, for she knew no sin ;
Yet had she oft been chased with horns and hounds
And Scythian shafts ; and many-winged wounds
Aimed at her heart ; was often forced to fly,
And doomed to death, though fated not to die.

These are truly noble couplets. How “ the lines vibrate like polished lances !”

L.—I quite agree with you. Pope has never equalled his master in the art of versification ; but then, he has surpassed him in delicacy of satire, in the elegant turn of his compliments, in tenderness of sentiment, and in richness of fancy.

H.—Yes—in these respects Pope goes beyond his master, for Dryden never drew a tear, and he had not much fancy. But he had a far more vigorous understanding, a better ear, and a greater command of the mechanism of his art. He expressed himself with such freedom in verse, that he seemed to find it almost as easy to connect rhyme with reason—to argue a grave question in metre—as to support an unfettered private conversation in familiar prose. Dryden is now not popularly read, but poetical students always feel themselves refreshed by a perusal of his manly, free, and thoroughly English verses. And his prose too—is the best in the language—a perfect model for the student in English composition—so idiomatical and unaffected, so clear, so fluent, and spirited, and varied, and sometimes also so strikingly *picturesque*. Did you ever read this passage ?—none but a poet could have written it. It is quoted by James Montgomery with due admiration in his Lectures on Poetry.

It was on that memorable day in the first summer of the late war, when our navy engaged the French ; a day wherein the two most mighty and best appointed fleets which any age had ever seen, disputed the command *of the greater half of the globe, the commerce of nations, and the riches of the Universe*. While these vast floating bodies on either side, moved against each other in parallel lines, and our countrymen, under the happy conduct of his Royal Highness, went breaking, by little and little, into the line of the enemy ; *the noise of the cannon from both navies reached our ears about the city ; so that all men, being alarmed with it, and in dreadful suspense of the event, which they knew was then deciding, every one went following the sound as his fancy led him ;* and leaving the town almost empty, some took towards the park, some cross the river, others down it ; *all seeking the noise in the depth of silence*. Amongst the rest, it was the fortune of Eugenius, Crites, Liscideius, and Neander, to be

in company together : three of those persons whom their wit and quality have made known to all the town ; and whom I chose to hide under these borrowed names, that they may not suffer by so ill a relation as I am going to make their discourse.

Taking then a barge, which a servant of Lisedeius had provided for them, they made haste to shoot the bridge, *and left behind them that great fall of waters which hindered them from hearing what they desired* : after which, having disengaged themselves from many vessels which rode at anchor in the Thames, and almost blocked up the passage towards Greenwich, they ordered the watermen to let fall their oars more gently ; and then, every one favoring *his own curiosity with a strict silence*, it was not long ere they perceived the air to break about them like the noise of distant thunder, or of swallows in a chimney : *those little undulations of sound, though almost vanishing before they reach them*, yet still seeming to retain somewhat of their first horror which they had betwixt the flocks. After they had attentively listened till such time as *by little and little the sound went from them* ; Eugenius lifting up his hand, and taking notice of it, was the first who congratulated to the rest that happy omen of our nation's victory : adding, that we had but this to desire in confirmation of it, that we might hear no more of *that noise which was now leaving the English coast.*—*Dryden's Essay on Dramatic Poesy.*

L.—This passage shows more imagination than I gave Dryden credit for.

H.—Dryden is too much neglected in these times. The English have reason to be proud of him.

L.—Pope was a great writer too, but he sadly plundered his master. What barefaced plagiarisms—what servile echoes are these !

Happy who in his verse can justly steer,
From grave to gay from lively to severe.

Dryden

————— Happily to steer,
From grave to gay from lively to severe.

Pope.

For truth had such a face and such a mien
As to be loved needs only to be seen.

Dryden.

Vice is a monster of such frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen.

Pope.

'Tis being devout at play, wise at a ball
Or bringing wit and friendship to Whitehall.

Dryden.

Mad at a fox-chase, wise at a debate
Drunk at a borough, civil at a ball,
Friendly at Hackney, faithless at Whitehall.

Pope.

For who can rail so long as he can sleep ?

Dryden.

For who can rail so long as they can write ?

Pope.

And Heaven had wanted one immortal song.

Dryden.

The world had wanted many an idle song.

Pope.

To heave the stone against the rising mount,
Which, urged and labored and forced up with pain,
Recoils, and rolls impetuous down, and smokes along the plain.

Dryden.

With many a weary step, and many a groan :
Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone,
The huge round stone resulting with a bound
Thunders impetuous and down smokes along the ground.

Pope.

And round him the pleased audience clapped their wings.

Dryden.

And all the aerial audience clap their wings.

Pope.

* So the false spider, when her nets are spread
Deep ambushed in her silent den does lie,
And feels far off the trembling of her thread.
Whose filmy cord should bind the struggling fly.

Dryden.

The spider's touch, so exquisitely fine,
Feels at each thread and lives along the line.

Pope.

So stands the Thracian herdsman with his spear
Full in the gap, and *hopes the hunted bear.*

Dryden.

The patient fisher takes his silent stand,
Intent, his angle trembling in his hand,
With looks unmoved, he *hopes the scaly breed,*
And eyes the dancing cork and bending reed.

Pope.

L.—Those last four lines are highly picturesque and pleasing.

H.—They are so—but let me go on.

Dissembling sleep, and watchful to betray
With inward rage he meditates his prey.

Dryden.

Resolved to win, he meditates the way
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray.

Pope.

They neither are, nor were, nor e'er can be.

Dryden.

Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.

Pope.

Who dies to-day, and will as long be so
As he who died a thousand years ago.

Dryden.

And when I die be sure you let me know.
Great Homer died a thousand years ago.

Pope.

And where imprisoned in so sweet a cage
A soul might well be pleased to pass an age.

Dryden.

Most souls 'tis true but peep out once an age.
Dull sullen prisoners in the body's cage.

Pope.

But far more numerous was the herd of such,
Who think too little or who talk too much.

Dryden.

Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little or too much.

Pope.

Avoid extremes, and shun the fault of such,
Who still are pleased too little or too much.

Pope.

Short is the date of all immoderate fame.

Dryden.

Short is the date, alas ! of modern rhymes.

Pope.

Let honor and perferment go for gold,
But glorious beauty isn't to be sold.

Dryden.

Judges and Senates have been bought for gold,
Esteem and love are never to be sold.

Pope.

Never debase yourself by treacherous ways,
Nor by such abject methods seek for praise.

Dryden.

To what base arts, and by what abject ways,
Are mortals urged through sacred lust of praise.

Pope.

Let mighty Spenser raise his reverend head,
Cowley and Denham start up from the dead.

Dryden.

Nay, should great Homer rear his reverend head
Zollus himself would start up from the dead.

Pope.

I could easily increase the number of these specimens of Pope's pilferings after a very slight search, but these as you see I can either call to my remembrance, or turn to at once.

L.—Dr. Joseph Warton instances no less than seven different lines in the single poem of *Eloisa to Abelard* as thefts from various parts of Dryden's works.

O name for ever sad, for ever dear—
Now warm in love now withering in my bloom—
Curse on all laws but those which love has made—
And paradise was opened in the wild—
Thy eyes diffused a reconciling ray—
And love the offender, yet detest the offence—
I come, I come, prepare your roseate bowers.

Warton does not refer us to the corresponding passages in Dryden, but I think I recollect them with tolerable exactness.

O day for ever sad, for ever dear—
Now warm in love now withering in the grave—
And own no laws but those which love ordains—
And paradise was opened in his face—
His eyes diffused a venerable grace—
She hugged the offender and forgave the offence—
I come without delay,—I come—

One or two of your own quotations, *H.*—, are from the *Art of Poetry*, translated by Dryden from Boileau, and several, if I am not mistaken, are from the *Essay on Satire*, by John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire. The noble poet laid claim to the latter production, though it is now usually printed amongst the works of Dryden. The translation from Boileau was partly Sir William Soame's.

H.—The general impression on the first appearance of the *Essay on Satire*, I believe, was that it was originally

written by the Duke of Buckinghamshire, but that it was much altered and improved by Dryden, whose strong hand may sometimes, I think, be pretty distinctly recognized. Hallam, however, asserts that Dryden had nothing to do with it, a conclusion at which he arrives from the character of the poem. Dryden was waylaid and beaten for some allusions in the *Essay on Satire* to the Earl of Rochester and the Duchess of Portsmouth.

L.—The Duke of Buckinghamshire was said to have been very proud of the poem, and, perhaps, you remember his couplet in his *Essay on Poetry*, in which he says of Dryden,

Though praised and beaten for another's rhymes,
His own deserve as great applause sometimes.

H.—The whole of that last line is rich—but the qualifying expression of *sometimes* is particularly comical! Dryden while praising Sheffield so extravagantly, in the dedication of the *Aeneis* takes care very slyly to relieve himself from all claim to the *Essay on Poetry*. "Your *Essay on Poetry*, which was published without a name, and of which I was not honored with the confidence, I read over and over with much delight and as much instruction." Dryden is not only to be traced in the *Essay on Satire*, from which I have taken only two specimens, but is seen to strike out some sparkles of his own, in the translation from Boileau, which he also corrected and altered with great freedom. I have made but three quotations from it. On the shelf behind you is a copy of Sheffield. I should like to see the context of the couplet quoted.

L.—This is odd enough. The couplet is referred to by Johnson in his life of Dryden, as from the *Art of Poetry* by Sheffield. Sheffield's poem is entitled *An Essay on Poetry*; I cannot find the couplet.

H.—Perhaps Sheffield was laughed at for his presumption, and was induced to drop the lines out of the later editions of the poem.

L.—I see that he has, at all events, kept a couplet, with the same concluding words.

'Tis not a flash of fancy, which sometimes,
Dazzling our minds, sets off the slightest rhymes.

Pope had a passage of Sheffield's in his mind when he wrote his well-known couplet—

Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.

Here are Sheffield's lines—

Reject that vulgar error (which appears
So fair) of making perfect characters;
There's no such thing in nature, and you'll draw
A faultless monster which the world ne'er saw.

H.—Dr. Johnson traces the '*faultless monster*' to Scaliger. But, to return to Pope; he even plunders the prose of Dryden, and turns it into verse.

He is a leveller in poetry; he *creeps* along with *ten little words in every line*, and helps out his numbers with *for, to, and unto*, and all the pretty *expletives* he can find.—*Dryden*.

While expletives their feeble aid do join
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line.—*Pope*.

Good sense and good nature are never separated.—*Dryden*.

Good nature and good sense must ever join.—*Pope*.

L.—In spite of the objections which have been made to monosyllabic lines, it would be easy to show that it is wrong to reject them altogether. Pope himself has some spirited lines made up of single and independent syllables.

Ah come not, write not, think not once of me!—
No, fly me, fly me, far as pole from pole!

And what force and what expansive meaning 'has that line in Milton—

Rocks, caves, lakes, dens, bogs, fens, and shades of death.

Wordsworth in a letter to Scott, says—"I admire Dryden's talents and genius highly—but his is not a poetical genius." Can any one read even the prose passage, which we read just now, and doubt that Dryden was a true poet? Look at his Fables from Chaucer and Boccaccio; written in his extreme old age, too, and "with the bayonet of necessity at his back."

TORIES.—The Duke of Wellington, with his military notion of passive obedience, thought for a long time that all that was necessary to put down public opinion was an order from the Horse Guards, and that by pronouncing public meetings *farce*, the people would see the error of their ways. I should like to know the feeling with which such men survive the reign of narrow opinions, and find themselves in the minority as the age advances in general enlightenment. They cannot but confess that the awful evils which they considered the necessary and immediate result of all political changes in favor of the people, were the dreams of ignorance. Nothing whatever has occurred that seems to fulfil or to confirm any one of their favorite prophecies and theories.

The Duke of Wellington is not the kind of man who is likely to confess, even to his own mind, that all the dear opinions of his life are falsified by the history of his country and self-deception is not difficult even in the face of the most startling contradictions in the shape of plain matters of fact. One is occasionally amused in private society with meeting a solitary Tory who does not seem at all aware of the abs

dity and loneliness of his position. His mind stands stock still, and he is not in the least conscious of the rapidity with which the rest of the world is passing by him. He repents the old fallacies in favor of the few against the many—talks, like Lord Eldon, of the sacredness that doth hedge a king—speaks with untroubled assurance of the divine right to govern wrong, and wonders at the nonsense of the principle which makes all considerations give way to the greatest happiness of the greatest number. He is a living memorial of dead error.

It is better not to think of the Duke of Wellington as a politician, but to remember what he has done for his country as a soldier. The last time I saw him he was sitting in his usual place in the House of Lords, and in his usual attitude,—his head hanging down upon his breast, his hat over his eyes, and his arms and legs crossed. He never raised his head, nor did he utter a single word to any one. When he rose to leave the House he seemed to walk feebly, and I fear that his iron constitution is rapidly breaking up. What a fortunate fate is that of this illustrious commander, who in every direction sees his own image multiplied in bronze or marble,

And reads his history in a nation's eyes.

He is living as it were in posterity, if the Irishism may be permitted, and is enjoying all those honors in his life-time which are usually reserved for the grave.

There seems to be occasionally the same prostration of mind in politics as there is in religion, when the weight of early associations and early prejudices oppresses the judgment. I am acquainted with two or three very clever shrewd men who see all truth but political truth with great quickness. These men avow their belief in the doctrine of the divine right of kings, and their entire independence of the millions of human hearts placed at their mercy, except that they will have to answer to their God in a future life. But that in the meantime the happiness of millions should be at a single man's irresponsible disposal is a matter of no moment. So a king might amuse himself, as some French king once did, with taking shots at his people as they pass his palace—killing them with as little remorse as if they were so many sparrows. The people have no right to protect themselves against the "Lord's anointed," for to what earthly tribunal could he be called? "The king can do no wrong." Pope makes the Goddess of Dulness (in the *Dunciad*) express her extreme partiality for "Arbitrary sway," and the doctrine of the divine right of kings—

For me if Dulness sees a grateful day
'Tis in the shade of arbitrary sway.

O ! if my sons may learn one earthly thing
 Teach but that one sufficient for a king ;
 That which my priests, and mine alone maintain,
 Which as it dies or lives we fall or reign ;
 May you my Cam and Isis preach it long !
The right divine of kings to govern wrong !

The Tory has only one king in his eye—the reigning king—and a *European* ! The innumerable little kings of barbarous and petty states do not seem quite so sacred. Perhaps he would hesitate to talk of the divine right of one of the naked kings of the Marquesas Islands. Like all prejudiced and one-sided reasoners, the Tory keeps clear of definitions, and will not explain precisely what sort of kings are appointed by God to reign over men with irresponsible power.

MACAULAY.—A.—It has been objected to the Baconian philosophy, that it overrates the importance of those sciences which minister to the physical well-being of man, and that it under-rates the importance of moral philosophy.

H.—Macaulay notices this objection, but goes himself even greatly beyond Lord Bacon in advocating the doctrine of utility in the lowest sense of the word. Who would have expected this illustration of the doctrine of utility in its narrowest sense, this elevation of *physics* above *ethics*—of a shoemaker above a Reviewer—from the old antagonist of the utilitarians—and from the very same pen that has been so often employed to turn them into ridicule ? I deeply regret that Macaulay should lend his brilliant powers to the support of so dull a cause.

A.—I think you greatly overrate him.

H.—I think *you* greatly under-rate him ; even his least felicitous productions seem the work of no ordinary hand. They are always vigorous and lively. He never wearies us ; though he sometimes dwells much longer upon his subject than the occasion requires. He seems to have studied English history with uncommon earnestness and success, and in his historical reviews, betrays a peculiar pleasure in introducing elaborate portraits of celebrated persons, drawn with wonderful dexterity and precision.

A.—A consciousness of his skill in this mode of illustration tempts him to use it to excess, or to thrust his pictures into places where they are out of keeping, or where at least they could be easily dispensed with. Much, for instance, of his elaborate historical illustration in the article on Bacon might have been very well omitted, without the slightest injury to the interest of the main subject ; and in some of his other essays, the passion for portrait-painting has taken so strong a hold of him, that he leaps beyond the utmost limits of

historical research, loses sight of beings of flesh and blood, and trusts almost wholly to his fancy and invention ; reminding us strongly of a well known passage in Cowper's *Task*—

Some write a narrative of wars and feats
Of heroes little known ; and call the rant
A history : describe the man, of whom
His own coevals took but little note,
* And paint his person, character, and views
As they had known him from his mother's womb.
They disentangle from the puzzled skein,
In which obscurity has wrapped them up,
The threads of politic and shrewd design,
That ran through all his purposes, and charge
His mind with meanings that he never had,
Or, having, kept concealed.

H.—Nothing can be more powerful, animated, and striking, than Macaulay's best historical sketches.

A.—But when he affects a kind of confidential intimacy with men who have been quietly inurned for several centuries and narrates the events of former ages, with the minuteness and precision of an actual eye-witness, one cannot but feel that he is encroaching on the province of the novelist. In Godwin's *Essay on Posthumous Fame*, there are some acute remarks on the uncertainty of history, that I should like to recommend to the notice of Macaulay. Godwin maintains that history is a tissue of fables ; that there is no reason to believe that any one page in history is extant which exhibits the unmixed truth ; that human affairs are so entangled, human motives so subtle, and so variously compounded, that the exact truth can never be discovered. He observes too that no man ever completely understood the character of any other, even of his most familiar friend. If this be true, how absurd a personage is a dogmatizing historian who pretends to a thorough knowledge of the characters and designs of the politicians of former ages !

H.—Macaulay occasionally illustrates his arguments with images that are peculiarly vivid and poetical. They are, perhaps, not always new, but they are always pleasing and appropriate. There is a passage in an article of his on Sir James Mackintosh's *History of the Revolution in 1688* that is singularly beautiful. It describes the progress of national enlightenment. Here it is :

Faint glimpses of truth begin to appear, and shine more and more into the perfect day. The highest intellects, like the tops of mountains, are the first to catch and reflect the dawn. They are bright, while the level below is still in darkness. But soon the light, which at first illumined only the loftiest eminences, descends on the plain, and penetrates to the deepest valley.

A.—Macaulay has borrowed this illustration from himself.

In his article on Dryden (in the *Edinburgh Review* of 1828,) he has the same image.

The sun illuminates the hill, while it is still below the horizon ; and truth is discovered by the highest minds a little before it becomes manifest to the multitude. This is the extent of their superiority. They are the first to catch and reflect a light, which, without their assistance, must, in a short time, be visible to those who lie far beneath them.

Macaulay's articles are easily recognized by any careful observer of the peculiarities of style. Though a great admirer of our elder writers, he indicates in his own practice an absolute horror of the long sentences, the stately march, and difficult involutions of English prose in the time of Elizabeth and James. He has a taste for short, epigrammatic, and unconnected periods ; a style which Coleridge, says an ancient critic, would have thought purposely invented for persons troubled with the asthma to read, and for those to comprehend who labour under the pitiable asthma of a short-witted intellect. The French, from whom it is borrowed, call it the style *coupé*, in opposition to the style *périodique*. Just hand me that volume of Dr. Channing's works. I must read you what he says of long sentences—

A full mind will naturally overflow in long sentences. I delight in long sentences in which a great truth, instead of being broken up into numerous periods, is spread out in its full proportions, is irradiated with a variety of illustration and imagery, is set forth in a splendid affluence of language, and flows, like a full stream, with a majestic harmony, which fills at once the ear and the soul.

A good style, however, consists not in the use of either long or short sentences exclusively, but in a judicious alternation of both. Macaulay gives us too many short ones of the same sound and character. Perspicuity is thus gained with little trouble ; for in a sentence of a single line it is not difficult to avoid obscurity ; and by its clearness and brevity the reader is saved all effort and fatigue. Short sentences are easy to write and easy to read. But in the too liberal employment of such sentences, the writer is apt to become wordy, with a false appearance of conciseness, and the reader's memory at last fails him. He discovers that the impression upon his mind is vague and confused, owing to the absence of certain links of style, and a proper continuity of thought. The perspicuity, therefore, is in individual sentences, and not in the entire composition. Too many short periods coming together have a snappish and flippant air, quite opposed to the dignity which should characterise the style of an historical writer, who wishes to be impressive. Listen to these specimens of Macaulay's brevities in his paper on Bacon. They seem like notes for an

intended article, rather than the portions of a finished composition.

He soon had a lesson which he never forgot. The favorite received the news of the Lord Keeper's interference, with feelings of the most violent resentment, and made the King even more angry than himself. Bacon's eyes were at once opened to his error, and to all its possible consequences. He had been elated, if not intoxicated, by greatness. The shock sobered him in an instant. He was all himself again. He apologized submissively for his interference. He directed the Attorney-General to stop proceedings against Coke. He sent to tell Lady Coke that he could do nothing for her. He announced to both the families that he was desirous to promote the connexion. Having given these proofs of contrition, he ventured to present himself before Buckingham.

Perhaps they ought to have been printed in this form, and have been entitled *Memoranda*—

He had been elated, if not intoxicated, by greatness.
The shock sobered him in an instant.
He was all himself again.
He apologized submissively for his interference.
He directed the Attorney-General to stop proceedings against Coke.
He sent to tell Lady Coke that he could do nothing for her.

It is not often that we meet in the pages of any other writer so many laconic bits so closely clustered. They give an air of vivacity to the style, but at the expense of better qualities. Remarks in their nature serious, seem to want gravity and earnestness—

Light quirks of music, broken and uneven,
Make the soul dance upon a jig to heaven.

RHYMES.—I was dipping the other day into Wakefield's observations upon Pope's Homer. Though he generally speaks of the translator with enthusiastic admiration, he is dreadfully shocked at his occasional false rhymes. He instances the rhymes in a couplet from the *Odyssey*, which seem particularly to have excited his indignation—

There o'er my hands the living wave I *pour*,
And Heaven and Heaven's immortal thrones *adore*.

He observes that these rhymes are “insufferably barbarous.” If he had looked into a pronouncing dictionary for the word *pour*, he would have found that the reader is directed to pronounce it *pore*, which is surely not a bad rhyme to *dore*. Perhaps Wakefield pronounced it *power*. This reminds one of Goldsmith's condemnation of *key* as a rhyme to *be*. He pronounced it *kay*. Wakefield's ear was sadly distressed by another couplet!—

The trembling priest along the shore returned,
And in the anguish of a father mourned.

He proposes to get rid of the imperfect rhymes, and to read—

The trembling priest along the shore *recedes*,
His breast with all a father's anguish bleeds.

Can any thing be more affected and abominable than this?
The priest *recedes* along the shore!

Our language is not so rich in rhymes, that we can afford to be as squeamish in the use of them as Wakefield would have us be, unless we are willing in every second or third couplet to sacrifice the sense to the sound.

We cannot arrive at any very certain conclusions on the subject of pronunciation from Pope's rhymes, which were frequently so grossly inexact, that Swift, who was a very careful rhymester himself, used to remonstrate with him for setting so bad an example. I suspect, however, that in Pope's time the *l* in the word *fault* must have been silent, or he would hardly have rhymed it *thought*.

We know there are to whose presumptuous *thoughts*
Those free'r beauties e'en in them seem *faults*.

Before his sacred name flies every *fault*,
And each exalted stanza teems with *thought*.

Dryden also adopts the same rhymes :—

I who have all the while been finding *fault* •
E'en with my master, who first satire *taught*.

And Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, says—

Yet modern laws are made for later *faults*,
And new absurdities inspire new *thoughts*.

We may come lower down with our examples. Here is a couplet from Goldsmith :—

Yet he was kind, or if severe in *aught*
The love he bore to learning was in *fault*.

Indeed we may refer to a writer of the present century—Charles Lamb, who adopts the same pronunciation of the word *fault*, in some doggerel lines addressed "*To an Infant that died as soon as it was born.*"

Just when she had exactly *wrought*
A finished pattern, without *fault*.

The lines were published in the *Gem*, a literary Annual, for 1829, edited by Hood. They are not in Lamb's collected works, I think. Here is an amusingly absurd couplet from the same poem—

Mother's prattle, mother's kiss,
Baby fond thou ne'er wilt miss.

Baby *fond* !—The *fondness* or affection of a child that died as soon as it was born must have been inexpressibly passionate and profound.*

It is strange that a man like Lamb should be guilty of such stuff as this. As to his dropping the *l* in *fault*, it must have been purely the conscious and pedantic repetition of an old pronunciation or poetical license. He could not have supposed that the word was thus pronounced in his own times.

* Or is the word used in the old sense of weak, or foolish ?

AN OLD SCHOOL FELLOW.—*H.*—An old school-fellow is a sort of a relation—a school is a family, the members of which are linked together in after life by an almost fraternal tie, and the most agreeable associations. I know nothing more exciting than an accidental and unexpected meeting in a foreign land, with one who sat on the same form with us in boyhood.

L.—Poor Allan! how his familiar face startled me with a revival of the past! It came upon me like an early dream, and made the actual scenes around me a dim and disregarded vision. But very undreamlike were his stout frame and his hearty shake of the hand. "We met—'twas in a crowd"—a crowd of dark visages with white turbans. At such a moment we could have little sympathy with a foreign multitude. We thought but of the familiar faces in dear old England. Allan readily accepted my proposal to take some refreshment under my roof. I knew his taste, and therefore indented on the pastry cook. He was famous in his school-boy days for his patronage of the itinerant venders of delicious viands.

H.—The child is father of the man.

L.—I found that Allan was not very communicative or sentimental, until he had done more than ordinary justice to the table. He then began to think less of himself and more of his old playmate. He told me a thousand pleasant stories of the past, that made me exclaim with Coleridge—

Ah! that once more I were a careless child!

He has a wonderful memory; and I had to thank him for the revival of many little matters connected with my own juvenile history that but for him had been buried in eternal oblivion. The particulars which I best remembered of poor Allan, as a boy, were his egregious but harmless vanity, his admiration of his own legs, and the mortification which his dignity endured from the slightest personal chastisement. He one evening burst into a laugh while the master was reading prayers, and was condemned to be flagellated for his profane and ill-timed merriment. In those days, the old indecent system of applying the birch was in full fashion. I was desired to hoist the delinquent on my back. As he was larger, and heavier and stouter than myself, this was an impossible task; but poor Allan dropped his inexpressibles down to his ancles, and exposed those legs which he so much petted and admired to the criticism of a hundred eyes. Such a strong sense of the pitiable ludicrousness of his position, seized him at this critical moment, that, with the courage of desperation, he turned round upon his tyrannical pedagogue, and, with an air of offended dignity, remonstrated against so

indecent and degrading a punishment. The despot stared at him in silent astonishment, while Allan, drawing up his trowsers, solemnly assured him that he would submit to no corporal punishment or further personal exposure. There was a gravity, a stateliness and pomposity about Allan in his serious mood, that prodigiously heightened the effect of every ridiculous accident that befell him. The pedagogue did not long remain in his trance of astonishment. He rang the bell for Thomas, an athletic man-servant of all work. When Thomas appeared, he was ordered to hoist up Master Allan, who, while struggling manfully with the servant, and with an obstinate courage, perfectly awful in the eyes of his silent schoolmates, came in violent collision with a book-case, at the top of which was a large open ink-bottle, that falling on its side, spouted its whole contents upon his unlucky head. It turned poor Allan into a blackamoor on the instant, and the figure he cut was so irresistibly ludicrous, that it even changed the fury of the schoolmaster into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. Poor Allan, however, was not much bettered by it, for, though the flagellation was escaped, he was condemned to stand two hours on the form, with his unwashed Ethiopian face and soiled garments. From this unfortunate business he got the nickname of Othello, which was never uttered in his hearing without rousing him into a state of exasperation as violent as the emotions into which Iago worked the Lord of Desdemona. I thought reference to it now would rather amuse than offend him, and ventured to tell him that I would "drink a measure to the health of the black Othello." I was astounded at the effect it had upon him. He rose—said nothing—gave me a look of fiery indignation, and, before I could utter a word of remonstrance or apology, darted from the house. But I soon saw him again, and we were as good friends as ever.

ADDISON'S POETRY.—*D.*—I wish Addison had been as careful a condenser of his thoughts in verse as Pope was. How exquisitely harmonious and energetic is Pope's fine prologue to the cold and declamatory *Cato*! Addison was a far inferior poet even to Dr. Johnson, whose first couplet of the *Vanity of Human Wishes* has been so much ridiculed by recent critics for its tautology—

Let observation with extensive view,
Survey mankind, from China to Peru.

The first line is needless; as the couplet stands, the author makes himself say, (as Coleridge, I think, has explained)

"Let observation, with extensive observation, observe mankind."

F.—It reminds me of a sentence I met lately in Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, in which he speaks of one "whose talents *astonish us with wonder and surprise.*"

H.—How different is Johnson's couplet from the easy and unhesitating vigour of Dryden's—

Look round the habitable world, how few
Know their own good, or knowing it pursue.

But there is far more of feeble amplification and filling up of vacant spaces with mere words, in Addison than in Johnson. Look at the opening of *Cato*—

The dawn is overcast, the morning lours,
And heavily in clouds brings on the day—
The great, the important day, big with the fate,
O *Cato* and of *Rome*.

Another writer would have compressed these four lines into two—

Now heavily in clouds comes on the day
Big with the fate of *Cato* and of *Rome*.

Take a specimen of the same weak verbosity in the celebrated soliloquy—

The soul, secured in her existence, smiles
At the drawn dagger, [*and defies its point,*]
The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, [*and Nature sink in years,*]
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amid [*the war of elements,*
The wreck of matter, and] the crush of worlds.
What means this heaviness that hangs upon me ?
[*This lethargy that creeps through all my senses ?*]
Nature oppressed, [*and harassed out with care*]
Sinks down to rest.

F.—Johnson's *Irene* is just as bad a poem as *Cato*—perhaps worse. His blank verse is even more monotonous than Addison's, though rather less feeble.

And passion sleeps, while declamation roars.

It is strange that even Johnson could reconcile his ear to his own versification—

His mien is lofty, his demeanour great ;
Nor sprightly folly wantons in his air,
Nor dull serenity becalms his eyes ;
Such had I trusted once as soon as seen,
But cautious age suspects the flattering form
And only credits what experience tells.
Has silence pressed her seal upon his lips ?
Does adamant faith invest her heart ?
Will he not bend beneath a tyrant's frown ?
Will he not melt before ambition's fire ?
Will he not soften in a friend's embrace ?
Or flow dissolving in a woman's tears ?

This is not dramatic blank-verse, nor, indeed, decent blank-verse of any kind. It is not even good sense. The last line in particular is abominable stuff. The whole passage reads as if the poet had forgotten to *tag rhymes* to it.

D.—Dr. Johnson's heroic rhymes are generally forcible and striking, though deficient in variety of tone and in high imagination. But, perhaps, no man of acknowledged taste and ability ever wrote such detestable verses as Addison. A boy at school would deserve to be beaten for much better ones. Perhaps the worst poem in the largest collection of poetry extant (*Chalmer's English Poets*, in twenty-one volumes royal octavo) is Addison's *Account of the Greatest English Poets*; in which he tells us that Spenser, the poet's poet, amused a barbarous age,—but

Can charm an *understanding* age no more.

After mentioning Milton's poetical productions, he says :—

His other works might have deserved applause,
But now the language *can't* support the cause.

He makes no allusion to Shakespeare—he is not in the list of the Greatest English Poets!—but when he has yawningly expressed his weariness, after going through his laudations of other bards, he elegantly exclaims :—

I'm tired of rhyming, and would fain give o'er.

But justice, he says, demands one “labour more”—he had almost forgotten one of the Greatest English Poets—

The noble Montague remains unnamed.

After the mention of this vast genius, that “justice demands” should be remembered, when Shakespeare is forgotten, to the reader's extreme relief, the critical versifier brings his wretched doggerel to an end, but with an expression of modesty that is by no means out of place—

I've done at length ; and now, dear friend, receive
The last poor present that my Muse can give.
I leave the arts of poetry and *verse*
To those that practise them with more *success*.

F.—We must recollect that these lines were published in the writer's youth.

D.—He was twenty-two years of age when he published them. They were written at a period of life when a poet's fancy is freshest—his passions warmest. Recollect what Pope and Cowley did in their teens. Besides, look at Addison's later poems—they are a little more polished, indeed, but not a whit more poetical. Turn to his *Letter from Italy*, in which he *bridles* in his struggling Muse with pain. To bridle a goddess is no very delicate idea, as Johnson observes; but in the next line, Addison turns the goddess into a ship :—

That longs to *launch* into a nobler strain,

"An act," adds Johnson, "which was never hindered by a bridle." Turn to the *Campaign*—that "gazette in rhyme"—and what can be fairly said of even the vaunted simile of the Angel, if simile it may be called. "If I had set ten school-boys," said Dr. Madden, "to write on the battle of Blenheim, and eight had brought me the angel, I should not have been surprized." Macaulay thinks the extraordinary popularity of this simile is chiefly to be attributed to the allusion to an actual and most terrific storm—

Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past ;

And he regards it as a proof of the advantage which in rhetoric and poetry, the particular has over the general.*

And pleased the Almighty's orders to perform,

Is a line quite in the style of Addison's earliest poems. When he writes prose he is a magician. But when he attempts the "golden cadences of verse," he becomes a very ordinary personage.

F.—I think you do him injustice. Even in his *Account of the Greatest English Poets*, there is a very fair description of Milton's poetry, written at a time when *Paradise Lost* was little appreciated or understood. There is a line in it upon the subject of that mighty poet's conception of the Garden of Eden, which I still remember, though I read the poem many long years ago—

What tongue, what words of rapture can express
A vision so profuse of pleasantness ?

* There is some spirit and ingenuity in his *Lines to Sir Godfrey Kneller*—some grace and melody in his ode commencing

The spacious firmament on high
And all the blue etherial sky.

And in the Hymn in which this stanza occurs :—

For though in dreadful whirls we hung,
High on the broken wave,
I knew thou wert not slow to hear,
Nor impotent to save—

A stanza which delighted the early taste of Burns.

* The great tempest of November, 1703, the only tempest which in our latitude has equalled the rage of a tropical hurricane, had left a dreadful recollection on the minds of all men. No other tempest was ever in this country the occasion of a Parliamentary address or a public fast. Whole fleets had been cast away. Large mansions had been blown down. One prelate had been buried beneath the ruins of his palace. London and Bristol had presented the appearance of cities just sacked. Hundreds of families were still in mourning. The prostrate trunks of large trees, and the ruins of houses, still attested, in all the Southern counties, the fury of the blast.—*Edinburgh Review*.

D.—Though I can never allow that Addison was a poet in verse, he was unquestionably a poetical writer in prose. How exquisite is his *Vision of Mirza*! Listen to the music of some passages that haunt one like fragments of verse—

I fell into a profound contemplation on the vanity of human life ; and passing from one thought to another : “ Surely,” said I, “ man is but a shadow and life a dream”——

— A shepherd, with a little musical instrument in his hand. The sound of it was exceeding sweet and wrought into a variety of tunes that were inexpressibly melodious. * * * * I then turned again to the vision which I had been so long contemplating ; but instead of the rolling tide, the arched bridge and the happy islands, I saw nothing but the long hollow valley of Bagdat, with oxen, sheep, and camels grazing upon the sides of it.”

What a beautiful termination ! What melody—what picture !

F.—Addison was not only the Raphaelle of Essayists, but a true critic. If you look back to the time at which he wrote his papers on Milton, you will acknowledge that many remarks upon that great poet’s genius, which now seem little better than truisms, were then both new and bold. His specimens of Milton’s beauties are selected with exquisite judgment. It is the fashion now to speak contemptuously of Addison, and to characterize his prose as feeble, but I never meet with a quotation from his essays in a work of the present times, without being struck with the contrast which his chaste and careful elegance presents to the glaring and ambitious style of fine writing now in vogue. An extract from the *Spectator*, in a publication of this day, looks like a fragment of ancient sculpture in the studio of a modern artist. •

RESERVE.—Reserve of manner is equally characteristic of one of the most enlightened and of one of the most barbarous nations in the world—the English, and the North American savages. Whether it arises from the same cause or not in both cases, I can hardly pretend to determine. But the general opinion seems in favor of the theory that Reserve is the child of Pride. Vanity is loquacious and communicative. Certainly the English are the proudest nation living, and the North American Indians are not much behind them. If English pride be in some degree a defect, it has more dignity than the vanity of the French. The pride of the North American Indian “savors nobly,” and makes the stoic of the woods surpass in manly fortitude the stoic philosophers of antiquity. It is, perhaps, more easy to account for national reserve than the reserve of individuals, for, with respect to particular persons, it in some cases arises from very peculiar feelings.

EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE OF INDIA.—There is a vulgar outcry against what is called a liberal education. The complaint is, that it is not *practical*—that it does not make people better farmers, merchants, or mechanics. But it makes them better *men*, and surely a man need not work less successfully as a farmer, a merchant, or a mechanic, because he knows something beyond the limits of his own craft. General knowledge must surely tend to sharpen that sagacity which is to be directed to a particular object. A liberal education prepares a man more or less for every trade and profession in the world. It is astonishing how soon a man, whose wits have been brightened by a good general education, can master the difficulties of any single profession if he once concentrates all his powers upon it.

With respect to the natives of India, the main object is not to teach them how to make money;—they could teach us that;—but to elevate and purify their intellectual and moral nature. Let us compass that, and every thing else desirable will speedily follow. As to teaching all sorts of trades—how are all sorts of teachers to be had? How are they to be paid? And how are the students to find time for learning *every thing*? Already we hear loud complaints that their education is superficial—and why?—because too much even now is demanded of them. They are distracted by the variety of their studies. But what would be the result, if, besides being taught poetry, and mathematics, metaphysics and chemistry, and composition and logic, and law and music, and drawing and surveying, and English and Sanscrit, and Persian and Arabic, and Bengallee, they were obliged to make themselves at the same time good shoemakers, and brokers, and farmers, and confectioners, and farriers, and tanners, and tinkers, and tailors, &c., &c., &c., &c.

The idea is monstrous, and could only enter the head of one of those *practical* men, whose ideas are often more *impracticable* than the dreams of the most imaginative poets.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE FOR INDIA.—Nothing would more speedily or more effectually civilize the people of India and give them political strength, than a uniformity of language. It is the *great bond* of social union. It would change a thousand tribes into one people. A community of language is a community of thought. And if the people have now to choose a language, it is natural to suppose that they would give the preference to that of their more enlightened governors, many of whom, we hope, are quite as

anxious to improve the mind of India, as to increase its revenue. When people talk of the extreme difficulty of introducing the English language, they forget that it is not offered to *men* but to *children*. It is not the present, but the rising generation upon whom this blessing is to be conferred ; and every one knows with what extreme facility a child imbibes a language. The children of European parents in India generally speak English and Hindustani with equal facility. They learn them both simultaneously. And why should not the children of Indian parents do the same ? If the English language were taught with zeal and assiduity, in less than a quarter of a century there would be millions of young natives able to speak and write it with ease and accuracy.* It would take a much longer time for the natives to improve any of their own innumerable languages than to learn English. The science of the West could not be introduced into the native languages without the cultivators of the latter borrowing or inventing the entire nomenclature, and there are delicate shades of thought and exquisite turns of expression, that could never be transferred into the dialects of the East. The improvement of an imperfect language is a dreadfully slow process, whereas the acquisition of a new one, especially by the young, may be effected with comparative ease and rapidity. If the Government would once set earnestly to work upon their present plan, the result might be far more speedy and effective than is generally imagined, even by the majority of the Anglicizers themselves. It is not easy to reckon the good that has already been compassed by English education bestowed on Indian youths. Many of them, with a noble zeal, excited by the moral influence of an English education, are in the habit of devoting their leisure hours, gratuitously, to the task of communicating to their poorer countrymen the blessings they have themselves received at the hands of Englishmen. The public little know what a vast number of native children are thus receiving gratuitous instruction in English from the alumni and the ex-students of our colleges. We are to add to the effect of this most benevolent practice the influence of their example and conversation even upon their seniors who have not enjoyed the same advantages. Knowledge spreads like wild-fire.

The natives have a natural turn for languages, and are on many accounts eager to learn English, and are willing

* If the British connection with India endure for another century, English may possibly become the language of literature, as Greek was with the Jews and others under the Empire.—SIR ERSKINE PERRY.

to pay for instruction in that language, to the utmost of their means ; while, on the other hand, they exhibit such an indifference to their own language, that they can scarcely be induced to send their children to free patshallas.

Is it right then to neglect this opportunity to make English the leading language ? The natives generally know enough of their own language for all the necessary purposes of daily life :—why then discourage them from the acquisition of our own ? Where there is a *will*, there is generally a *way* ; and if the Government of India were determined to accomplish so grand and glorious an object—if they would devote to it but half as much money or zeal as they devote to the acquisition of an useless addition to their territories—they could, in half a century, make half the native *population* of India familiar with the English language, and thus open to this comparatively benighted country all the intellectual treasures—all the philosophy and knowledge, and morality and religion of European lands. What a magnificent boon ! What an unspeakable blessing ! Neither the laying down of lines of rail-road, nor the cutting of canals, nor the erection of public edifices, nor the surveys of cities or of districts—though works of unquestionable utility, and honorable to the Government—would be compared for a moment by a true philanthropist or statesman with the prodigious change which the wide diffusion of the English language would almost immediately effect in the character of the people.

BERKELEY.—*L.*—How like a changeful dream does this world appear to a thoughtful spirit ! The mind is like a magic lantern, and gives its own light to a quick succession of phantasmagorical figures ; all that we behold we create for ourselves. The world is but the mind. Berkeley's theory is not the eccentric frolic of an ingenious metaphysician. It is profoundly philosophical.

H.—Are you serious in saying so ?

L.—Perfectly.

— We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

H.—I grant that the theory of the immateriality of the world is not to be overthrown by any formal argument, and that Dr. Johnson's attempt to refute it by stamping upon a stone, ("I refute it thus !") was a proof that he did not understand the subject ; but there are many truths which must be taken for granted, and which it would be absurd to

reject because they do not admit of a logical demonstration.

L.—The Doctor, I suppose, thought he was imitating Diogenes, who, when called upon for a definition of motion, got up and walked.

H.—Berkeley's theory is not exclusively the property of any individual philosopher. It is almost as old as the world itself. It has been familiar to the Brahmins of Hindostan for many thousand years.

L.—All this only proves that it is founded on truth. It is the natural offspring of the thoughtful mind in all climes and under all conditions. It makes life a sort of dream; and that *life is a dream* is a truism in every circle of society. If life were in some respects less dream-like, it would be less endurable. It is trite to remark upon the pleasures of hope and the satiety of possession. That which is literal is tasteless. We live, but in the past or in the future.

'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view.

The past charms us because it is sleeping tranquilly in the moonlight of memory, and the future delights us because it laughs in the golden sunshine of hope.

APPROACH TO CALCUTTA FROM THE SANDHEADS.—As we come nearer to Calcutta, the soil on shore seems to improve in richness and the trees to increase in size. The richly varied hues of cultivated fields,—the vast and magnificent banian, with roots dropping from its highest branches and hundreds of them fixed into the earth (a glorious natural tent),—the tall, slim palms of different characters and with crowns of different forms, feathery or fan-like,—the many-stemmed and long, sharp-leaved bamboo, whose thin pliant branches swing gracefully under the weight of the lightest bird,—the large bright green peepul, with its burnished leaves glittering in the sunshine, and trembling at the zephyr's softest touch with a pleasant rustling sound, suggestive of images of coolness and repose,—produce, in their blended and general effect, a picture of sylvan beauty surpassing the creations of the most imaginative painter. But it is not until we arrive at a bend of the river called *Garden Reach*, where the City of Palaces first opens on the view, that the stranger has a full sense of the value of our possessions in the East. The white mansions (residences of English gentry), with their rich gardens and smooth slopes verdant to the water's edge, on our right; the picturesque Gothic edifice called the Bishop's College, and the large Botanic Garden on our left; and in front, as we advance a little further, the countless

masts of vessels of all sizes and characters, and from almost every clime,—the citadel of Fort William with its grassy ramparts and white barracks,—the Government House, a magnificent edifice in spite of imperfections,—the Town Hall—the Court House, and the noble lines of building along the Esplanade and the Chowringhee Road,—the high-sterned budgerows and small trim bauleahs along the edge of the river,—the neatly-painted palanquins and other vehicles of all sorts and sizes,—the variously-hued and variously-clad people of all conditions, the fair European, the black and nearly naked Cooly, the clean-robed and lighter-skinned native Baboo, the Oriental nobleman with his jewelled turban and kingcob vest, and costly necklace and twisted cummerband, on a horse fantastically caparisoned, and followed in barbaric state by a train of attendants with long, golden-handled punkahs, peacock feathers, and gold and silver sticks, present altogether a scene that is calculated to at once delight and bewilder the traveller, to whom all the strange objects before him have something of the enchantment and confusion of a dream. When he recovers from his surprise, the first emotion in the breast of an Englishman is a feeling of national pride. He exults in the recognition of so many glorious indications of the power of a small and remote nation that has founded a splendid empire in so strange and vast a land.

When the first impression begins to fade, and he takes a closer view of the great metropolis of India—and familiarity breeds something like contempt for what originally excited a pleasing wonder—the English traveller in the East is apt to dwell too exclusively on the dark side of the picture, and to become insensible to the real interest, and blind to the actual beauty of the scene around him. Extravagant astonishment and admiration, under the influence of novelty, a strong re-action, and a subsequent feeling of unreasonable disappointment, seem, in some degree, natural to all men ; but in no other part of the world, and under no other circumstances, is this peculiarity of our condition more conspicuously displayed than in the case of Englishmen in India. Perhaps the climate, producing lassitude and low spirits, and a yearning for their native land, of which they are so justly proud, contribute to make our countrymen in the East peculiarly unsusceptible of pleasurable emotions, until they become daily more unwilling to be satisfied with, or interested in the scenes and objects which remind them that they are in a state of exile.

LOVE-SONG.

And yet within a month,—
Let me not think on't;—Frailty, thy name is woman!

Ophelia.—'Tis brief, my lord.
Hamlet.—As woman's love.

I.

WITH what wild grief we parted,
Your sweet cheek bathed in tears!
Ah! *then* you were true-hearted,
And had been so for years;
You looked into mine eye
A speechless pang to trace,
Your white breast heaved a sigh,
Your soft hand stroked my face.

II.

I knew that there was never
A fairer form than thine,
Yet forced awhile to sever
No jealous fear was mine;
But now I needs must deem
This heart you quite forsake—
Or is it a dark dream
From which I yet may wake?

III.

Ah no! a real change
A few brief months have wrought!
New hopes your soul estrange;
You grant not *me* a thought;
My rival's breast is gay;
His tones love's triumph peal;
You hear not what I say,
You heed not what I feel.

IV.

Oh, Woman, what a spell
Thou breath'st o'er man's poor heart!
I thought if this befel
How calmly I could part;
That pride would nerve my soul
To keep down every pain,
And teach me to control
All feeling save disdain.

V.

Though now I try to hate
 What once 'twas sweet to prize,
 A heart whose altered state
 I ought but to despise,
 One glance at those sweet brows,
 One thought of happier hours,
 My best resolve o'erthrows,
 My manhood quite o'erpowers.

VI.

Your sins before me set,
 I find you false and vain ;
 Old kindness you forget,
 Old anger you retain ;
 Imperious is your sway ;
 You deem all praise your due ;
 And when you hearts betray,
 Insult and wound them too.

VII.

And yet I love you still,
 Such sovereign rule is thine ;
 Your stronger mind and will
 Have so prostrated mine ;—
 That voice and form and face,
 Have witchery yet for me,
 E'en while your faults I trace
 And all your frailties see.

VIII.

Myself I truly scorn,
 And o'er my weakness brood ;
 I feel the more forlorn
 In wanting fortitude ;
 Self-anger adds a sting
 To each hard word of thine ;
 I know how mean a thing
 Is slavish love like mine.

IX.

You cannot break my chain,
 Unless you break my heart ;
 To see you is a pain,
 But ah ! 'twere death to part !
 Thus wretches cling to life,
 When life hath nought to give,
 And dreading the last strife,
 With coward courage live.

AN ADDRESS TO SLEEP.

OH ! gentle Sleep !
 Bring thy most soothing dream
 To calm my spirit now ;
 And thy soft tresses steep
 In Lethe's silent stream
 To lave my burning brow !
 Oh ! faithless maid !
 To fly when grief appears,
 And the fevered form is laid
 On a bed bedew'd with tears !
 In happier hours,
 When Peace, thy bridal-maid,
 Led thee to the secret shade,
 Where verdant boughs were twined
 O'er gorgeous summer flowers,
 Thou wert not so unkind !
 Farewell ! a brief farewell !
 Relenting Fate is nigh,
 For swiftly speeds the welcome night
 When Death, with unresisted might,
 Shall make thee haunt the silent cell,
 Where this worn frame shall lie !

TO A LADY.

OH ! were I, fairest friend, a poet true,
 I would not wish a prouder theme for praise
 Than worth like thine. Yet when such meed is due,
 How poor must seem the most melodious lays !
 It is not that thy flexile figure gives
 At each sweet change the line that painters love ;
 It is not that the soul of beauty lives
 In that large fawn-like eye ; nor that above
 Its liquid light the bow of Cupid bends ; —
 Nor that each lovely lineament transcends
 The common mould ; nor that thy voice's tone
 Is music's magic — Oh ! not these alone
 Would fix for life each friendship of an hour : —
 But this thy praise — that with such sovereign power
 As would inebriate the vulgar brain,
 Unconscious of thy glory as a flower,
 And guileless as a child, thy gentle reign
 Ne'er gave a rival's heart a passing pain.



